



International  
Labour  
Organization

Evaluation  
Office

► Strategy and policy (2022)

# ► Independent High-Level Evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response 2020-22



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First published 2022

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High-level independent evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response, 2020-2022.  
Geneva: International Labour Office, 2022

ISBN 9789220375327 (web pdf)

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Printed in Switzerland

**▶ Independent High-Level  
Evaluation of ILO's  
COVID-19 response 2020-22**

# CONTENTS

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Abbreviations	
Acknowledgements .....	1
<b>1. Executive summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Background .....	24
About the High-Level Evaluation .....	25
Methodology .....	25
<b>3. Institutional response to the pandemic .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Navigating the crisis .....	29
Governance during the crisis .....	33
Resourcing the crisis response .....	35
Supporting constituents and social dialogue during the crisis .....	43
Contributing to the UN response .....	52
Planning, monitoring and reporting the ILO's response .....	57
Perspectives from the staff and constituent surveys .....	60
<b>4. Policy action in the pandemic .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Evolution of the ILO's policy response framework.....	66
The ILO's immediate response – improving knowledge and guiding policy.....	69
Action promoting inclusive economic growth and employment.....	77
Action promoting protection of all workers .....	103
Action promoting universal social protection .....	124
Aligning ILO action with UN and global response and SDGs .....	140
Analysis of CPOs and financial databases .....	150
Perspectives from the staff and constituent surveys .....	155
<b>5. Key findings and conclusions by evaluation criteria .....</b>	<b>160</b>
Introduction.....	161
Relevance .....	161
Coherence .....	163
Effectiveness.....	165
Efficiency.....	167
Impact and sustainability.....	168
Lessons .....	170
<b>6. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>7. Office responses .....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Annexes</b>	
Annex A: Interviews.....	193
Annex B: Evaluation questions.....	209
Annex C: Methodology.....	211
Annex D: Results of staff and constituent surveys.....	220
Annex E: Financial analysis.....	221
Annex F: Theory of Change.....	222
Annex G: ILO COVID-19 policy publications.....	223
Annex H: HLE Terms of Reference.....	230

## Tables

Table 1. Labour markets and the pandemic – key global effects and trends.....	79
Table 2. Protection in the workplace and effects of the pandemic – global issues and trends .....	104
Table 3. Focus of global products that reported responses to COVID-19 .....	154

## Boxes

Box 1: Constituent capacity building during the pandemic: ITCILO in Turin .....	50
Box 2: Rapid diagnostics for assessing the country-level impact of COVID-19 .....	84
Box 3: Case study – CINTERFOR .....	90
Box 4: Case study – Bosnia-Herzegovina: EU for Business Recovery – adjusting a project to meet COVID needs .....	94
Box 5: The SURE programme .....	96
Box 6: Findings from evaluation of SIDA support to ILO work in the field of the green economy 2020–22 .....	98
Box 7: Case study – Green Jobs and Just Transition in the ILO's response to COVID-19 .....	100
Box 8: Case study – support to maritime workers .....	107
Box 9: Better Work OSH interventions in the garment sector .....	113
Box 10: COVID-19 mitigation in the coffee supply chain: Mexico and Viet Nam .....	114
Box 11: Assistance to migrant workers in Jordan's garment factories .....	120
Box 12: Improving synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management .....	128
Box 13: Innovating with a “Basket Fund” in Madagascar .....	131
Box 14: Jointly advocating for Leaving No-one Behind in Thailand .....	138
Box 15: Case study – Indonesia – economic empowerment of women and vulnerable populations .....	149

## Figures

Figure 1: Number of COVID-19 related policy publications produced by the ILO per month .....	38
Figure 2: Number of COVID-19 related policy publications per type .....	38
Figure 3: Number of COVID-19 related policy publications per pillar of the ILO's policy framework .....	40
Figure 4: COVID-19 related policy publications based on inter-departmental collaboration .....	40
Figure 5: Citations of the ILO Monitor .....	60
Figure 6: Citations by organization type .....	60
Figure 7: Organizations citing the ILO Monitor .....	61
Figure 8: Repurposed or new resources (in US\$) per region for DC projects under Outcome 8 .....	62
Figure 9: Percentage of ILO country programmes with COVID-related social protection interventions contributing to gender equality .....	62
Figure 10: Percentage of ILO country programmes with COVID-related social protection interventions targeting vulnerable groups .....	63
Figure 11: Total expenditures associated with COVID-19 responses per Outcome per Region, 2020-21 (in USD) .....	64
Figure 12: Effectiveness of projects and programmes during COVID-19 by policy domain – staff survey .....	64
Figure 13: Effectiveness in strengthening capacities of social partners during COVID-19 by policy domain – staff survey .....	70
Figure 14: Effectiveness of awareness raising and advocacy activities during COVID-19 by policy domain – staff survey .....	70
Figure 15: Effectiveness of supporting legal and policy frameworks during COVID-19 by policy domain – staff survey .....	71
Figure 16: Effectiveness of ILO's sectoral work during COVID-19 – staff survey .....	74

# ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>ACT/EMP</b>	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
<b>ACTRAV</b>	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
<b>BCP</b>	Business Continuity Planning
<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Services
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
<b>BMZ</b>	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>C-BED</b>	Community-Based Enterprise Development
<b>CINTERFOR</b>	ILO Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training
<b>COOP</b>	ILO Cooperatives Unit (ENTERPRISES)
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>CPO</b>	Country Programme Outcome
<b>DG</b>	ILO Director-General
<b>DDG/FOP</b>	ILO Deputy Director-General Field Operations
<b>DDG/MR</b>	ILO Deputy Director-General Management and Reform
<b>DDG/POL</b>	ILO Deputy Director-General Policy
<b>DEVINVEST</b>	ILO Development and Investment Branch (EMPLOYMENT)
<b>DIALOGUE</b>	ILO Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit
<b>DWCP</b>	Decent Work Country Programme
<b>DWT</b>	Decent Work Technical Support Team
<b>EBMO</b>	Employer and Business Membership Organization
<b>EII</b>	Employment Intensive Investment
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	ILO Employment Policy Department
<b>ENTERPRISES</b>	ILO Enterprises Department
<b>EUESF</b>	European Union Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund
<b>EVAL</b>	ILO Evaluation Office
<b>FfDI</b>	Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond
<b>FPRW</b>	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
<b>FUNDAMENTALS</b>	ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Department
<b>GB</b>	ILO Governing Body
<b>GMT</b>	Global Management Team
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	ILO Governance and Tripartism Department
<b>GP</b>	Global Product
<b>HLE</b>	High-level evaluation
<b>HRD</b>	Human Resource Development
<b>IFAD</b>	International Food for Agricultural Development
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institution
<b>ILC</b>	International Labour Conference
<b>ILS</b>	International Labour Standard

<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IOE</b>	International Organisation of Employers
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ITCILO</b>	International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin)
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>LABADMIN/OSH</b>	ILO Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Health and Safety
<b>MNE</b>	Multinational enterprise
<b>MOOC</b>	Massive Open Online Course
<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small and medium Enterprises
<b>MULTI</b>	ILO Multinational Enterprises Unit (ENTERPRISES)
<b>NEP</b>	National employment policy
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government organization
<b>NORMES</b>	ILO International Labour Standards Department
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>OBW</b>	Outcome-based Workplan
<b>OCT</b>	Outcome Coordination Team
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
<b>OSH</b>	Occupational safety and health
<b>P&amp;B</b>	Programme and budget
<b>PARDEV</b>	ILO Partnerships and Field Support Department
<b>PES</b>	Public Employment Service
<b>PPE</b>	Personal protective equipment
<b>PSI</b>	Programme Support Income
<b>RBC</b>	Responsible Business Conduct
<b>RBM</b>	Results-based Management
<b>RBSA</b>	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
<b>RBTC</b>	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
<b>RESEARCH</b>	ILO Research Department
<b>SCORE</b>	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SECTOR</b>	ILO Sectoral Policies Department
<b>SERP</b>	UN Socio-Economic Response Plans
<b>SFP</b>	Social Finance Programme (ENTERPRISES)
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>SIYB</b>	Start and Improve Your Business
<b>SKILLS</b>	Skills and Employability Branch (EMPLOYMENT)
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium enterprise
<b>SOCPRO</b>	ILO Social Protection Department
<b>SP&amp;PFM</b>	Social Protection and Public Finance Management
<b>SSE</b>	Social and Solidarity Economy

<b>STATISTICS</b>	ILO Department of Statistics
<b>SURE</b>	Sustaining Resilient Enterprises Programme
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNRC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>WFP</b>	United Nations World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WORKQUALITY</b>	ILO Conditions of Work and Equality Department
<b>XBDC</b>	Extra-budgetary Development Cooperation





## Acknowledgements

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This report has been prepared by the independent ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL), by a team of independent evaluation consultants who had no prior association with the ILO's work during the COVID-19 pandemic, and members of ILO EVAL. The external team members were Mr Tony Powers (team leader), Ms Ruth Bowen, Mr Patrick Breard, Mr David Todd, Ms Ariane Corradi. They were supported by national and regional consultants: Mr Teodoro Sanz (regional Americas), Ms Kuanruthai Siripatthanakosol (Thailand), Ms Masy Andriamparanony (Madagascar), Ms Branka Andjelkovic (Regional Western Balkans), Mr George Martin Sirait (Indonesia) and Mr Nazar Jamil (Iraq) and Mr Jefter Mxotshwa (South Africa) Ms Kim Anh Nguyen (Viet Nam). A synthesis review of selected relevant evaluation reports was prepared by Mr Tony Powers and Ms Ariane Corradi as part of the evaluation preparation.

Naomi Asukai, Senior Evaluation Officer, was the task manager for the evaluation and member of the evaluation team, together with Patricia Vidal Hurtado, Evaluation Officer, who provided support and contributions to the report. Peter Wichmand, Senior Evaluation Officer, provided technical advice and inputs throughout the evaluation process. Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided inputs, technical guidance and oversight to ensure independence and quality of the evaluation.

EVAL would like to thank the members of the reference group constituted for this evaluation representing the three Deputy Director General Portfolios: Ms Tine Staermose (DDG/P), Mr Giovanni Di Cola (DDG/FOP) and Mr Iain Bald (DDG/MR) for their insightful advice and timely inputs to the various stages of this evaluation process. EVAL would further like to thank the ILO management, country office directors of the case study countries and programme staff who took time to contribute to the evaluation during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Special thanks are due to the constituents, ILO colleagues and partners who took their valuable time to share documentation and by participating in interviews and surveys conducted for the various case studies used in the evaluation.



01

▶ Executive Summary

## ▶ Executive Summary

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The independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's response to the implications of COVID 19 (2020-22) focuses on two dimensions of the ILO's response to the pandemic over the period from March 2020 to March 2022. First, it assesses how well the ILO adapted at an institutional level so that it could continue to deliver its mandate. Second, it measures how well the Organization refocused its policy work to meet the changing needs of the constituents during the crisis.

The high-level evaluation draws on multiple triangulated data sources to provide an evidence-based narrative of the ILO's response to the crisis in a setting of unprecedented turmoil and to draw overall conclusions on the ILO's performance in line with the internationally accepted evaluation criteria. Mixed methods and multiple means of analysis were used, including: document review; 354 interviews with staff, constituents and other stakeholders in Geneva and in the regions, including with staff in all decent work technical support teams (DWTs) and at the ILO Office for the United Nations in New York, the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre) and the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR);<sup>1</sup> surveys among staff and the constituents; eight instrumental country case studies (Argentina, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and Viet Nam); six thematic case studies; and a three-phase synthesis review<sup>2</sup> of 87 relevant project evaluations conducted in the period under review.

### THE ILO'S INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

#### Navigating the crisis

When the COVID-19 pandemic was first declared in March 2020, the ILO had had recent experience dealing with natural, economic and global health emergencies, but the scale and nature of COVID-19 were something new. None of the existing risk management and business continuity plans and procedures offered a road map that ILO management could use to navigate the crisis.

ILO management faced an operating environment of uncertainty and unpredictable change. Nobody knew at the time how long the crisis would last. An existing Crisis Management Team was reconvened and met almost daily for two years, chaired by the Director-General. Both the Senior Management Team and the Global Management Team were mobilized to devise, coordinate and communicate the ILO's institutional and policy response across the Organization. The "One ILO Connect" communications campaign involved most departments and offices, and helped bring the ILO together in the new hybrid work environment.

Senior management followed an adaptive management approach that accommodated continuous adjustments based on information gathered from the field and through data analysis. This approach required a willingness to re-evaluate and adjust decisions as the situation evolved. Such decisions were made quickly: "The ILO was uncharacteristically agile", said one senior manager when interviewed

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1. Of the 354 interviewees, 47 per cent were women.  
2. ILO, [ILO's Response to the Impact of COVID-19 on the World of Work: Evaluative Lessons on How to Build a Better Future of Work after the Pandemic – A Synthesis Review of Evaluative Evidence](#), 2022.

## Governance during the crisis

The ILO's governance systems were challenged during the crisis in unprecedented ways, demanding speed, adaptability and new virtual processes, while preserving social dialogue.

To guide the ILO's early response to the crisis and in view of the urgent action required, a four-pillar policy framework was defined.<sup>3</sup> It was presented to the Governing Body at its 340th Session (October–November 2020). Notwithstanding some concerns that there had not been prior constituent endorsement of the framework, the evaluation team found that it was aligned with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and with the Programme and Budget for 2020–21. Given the urgent need for action, the framework can be seen as a response that recontextualizes an endorsed policy direction rather than changing it.

Despite reservations about the virtualization of governance systems, the constituents were satisfied that the ILO's response was appropriate, and that the ILO had remained committed to social dialogue throughout the crisis. Senior management demonstrated its continuous engagement with the constituents, for example, by holding the Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work in July 2020 and by holding, over many months, entirely remote negotiations with constituents from 187 Member States, which led to the adoption by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021) – also held in a virtual format – of the Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

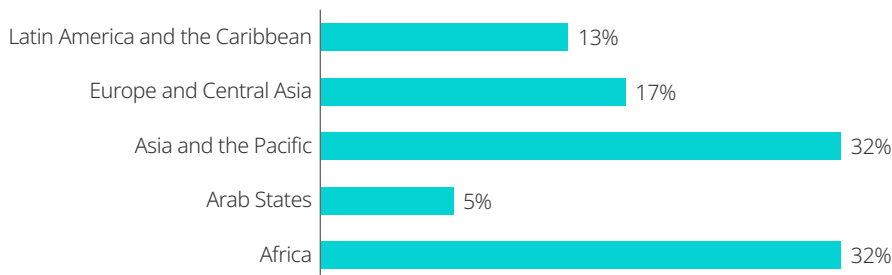
## Resourcing the crisis response

The Organization understood the need for budget flexibility and introduced innovative and proactive measures to allow an agile response at all levels, including the adaptation of regular budget and development cooperation funds. The ILO reached out to its funding partners to brief them on the ILO's actions in response to COVID-19 and on the situations in the field, and to discuss how projects might be adapted.

The high-level evaluation found that, for those expenditures it could track,<sup>4</sup> for the biennium 2020–21, the total expenditure of extra-budgetary resources associated with actions in response to COVID-19 was US\$180.7 million,<sup>5</sup> most of which came from extrabudgetary development cooperation contributions and from the regular budget supplementary account (US\$162 million). Almost half of the total regular budget technical cooperation funds were also allocated for this purpose.

Africa and Asia and the Pacific are the regions that reported the most expenditure associated with policy actions in response to COVID-19 (over US\$58 million) (figure 1).

**FIGURE 1.: REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF TRACKABLE EXPENDITURE ASSOCIATED WITH POLICY**



4 The four pillars are: stimulating the economy and employment; supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes; protecting workers in the workplace; and relying on social dialogue for solutions. See ILO, A Policy Framework for Tackling the Economic and Social Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis, ILO Policy Brief, May 2020.

5 Expenditure figures relate to country programme outcomes with a narrative on achievements relating to the response to COVID-19. The expenditure covers multiple actions that include, but do not exclusively address, the response to COVID-19. These results are therefore a proxy of the ILO's expenditure on the response to COVID-19.

6 In 2020–21, the ILO's overall expenditure was US\$1,104.6 million. See ILO, ILO Programme Implementation 2020–21, ILC.110/Report I(A), 2022.

Projects were adapted to their new circumstances, often through the use of virtual delivery methods and by revising training content, to emphasize responses to COVID-19, especially with regard to occupational safety and health (OSH). Evidence was found of extensive changes made by the ILO to programme strategy and services to redefine beneficiary targets, extend geographic coverage or add new products and services. New voluntary contributions, totalling US\$672.5 million, were also secured in 2020–21 (a 15 per cent decrease compared with 2018–19).

Human resources management played a vital role in ensuring business continuity. The ILO adapted quickly, establishing new systems, equipping staff to work remotely and ensuring workplace safety. However, the speed of the ILO's crisis response in the field was raised as a concern in interviews and surveys. Delays in funding approvals and in accessing technical specialists to meet increased COVID-19-related demand presented difficulties, which were only resolved in some cases by using expertise mobilized from repurposed ongoing or newly approved development cooperation projects. Some opportunities were lost due to this slow response.

### Supporting the constituents during the crisis

The ILO's capacity-building work pivoted to address the needs of employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) to survive and to provide value to their members in the crisis. A more centralized approach was used, which focused on producing global products to respond to COVID-19 that could be customized at the country level, including policy advocacy support, business continuity and support tools, local survey instruments (for example, 420 surveys were conducted in 50 Member States), and online training (for example, EBMOs in 27 Member States were reported to have scaled up virtual training). Information on global COVID-19 policy responses was shared (including via the ILO's COVID-19 portal). The programme and budget results exceeded the targets, but the constituents said that more needed to be done to strengthen the value proposition offered by EBMOs to their members (such as support for innovative member retention strategies).

The ILO shared global good practices in trade union responses and in maintaining social dialogue during the crisis. It organized online training and webinars at all levels; established a video staging site to guide trade unions on social dialogue and on ways to assist the most affected workers; ran the biennial Academy on Social Dialogue virtually; developed a new module for the Industrial Relations Global Toolkit on strengthening industrial relations in times of crisis; and developed new services to support workers in tackling COVID-19-related challenges, including through new digital tools and increased online media presence. Programme and budget targets were not met, and a digital divide was identified as a contributing factor, highlighting the need for face-to-face engagement with workers.

The needs of labour administration and social dialogue institutions changed as Member States sought guidance on crisis response policies and practices. The ILO supported the capacity-building of labour administration staff, the development of policies and protocols to monitor compliance with legislation to ensure a safe return to work, and the development of policy and guidance on working hours and fundamental principles and rights at work. Support for government COVID-19 responses was also provided across many other policy areas.

The Turin Centre played a central and much-expanded role in building constituent capacity to meet in innovative ways the many new challenges brought on by the pandemic. Its strategic shift to virtual delivery was accelerated during the pandemic, tripling its outreach. An evaluation conducted by the Turin Centre in 2021 reported knowledge acquisition and application rates that were similar to or higher than those reported in previous evaluations.

## Contributing to the United Nations response

The ILO's technical expertise, normative role and ability to produce authoritative labour market data during the pandemic enhanced its profile and engagement within the United Nations (UN) system, which resulted in it taking on a key role in shaping the UN's socio-economic response framework. This does not seem to have led to a corresponding increase in access to UN COVID 19 response funds, however, especially at the country level. Some noted that the ILO often struggled at the country level to be included in UN country team proposals and approaches. At the subregional and country levels, it was reported that participation in joint projects with several UN partners often proved to be unsatisfactory, as the funding was insufficient to justify the substantial staff inputs required.

The ILO's elevated profile led to new partnerships and commitments that could take the Organization beyond its regular programmes in terms of scope and scale. This raises questions about its resourcing and capacity to deliver, especially at the country level. These challenges are heightened by the extremely ambitious support scenarios implied by many broader UN initiatives, most notably the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, in which the ILO plays the lead role.

## THE ILO'S POLICY ACTION IN THE PANDEMIC: HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

The ILO began considering policy responses before the pandemic was formally declared and, to avoid mistakes from previous crises, shaped its framework to promote a human-centred recovery.

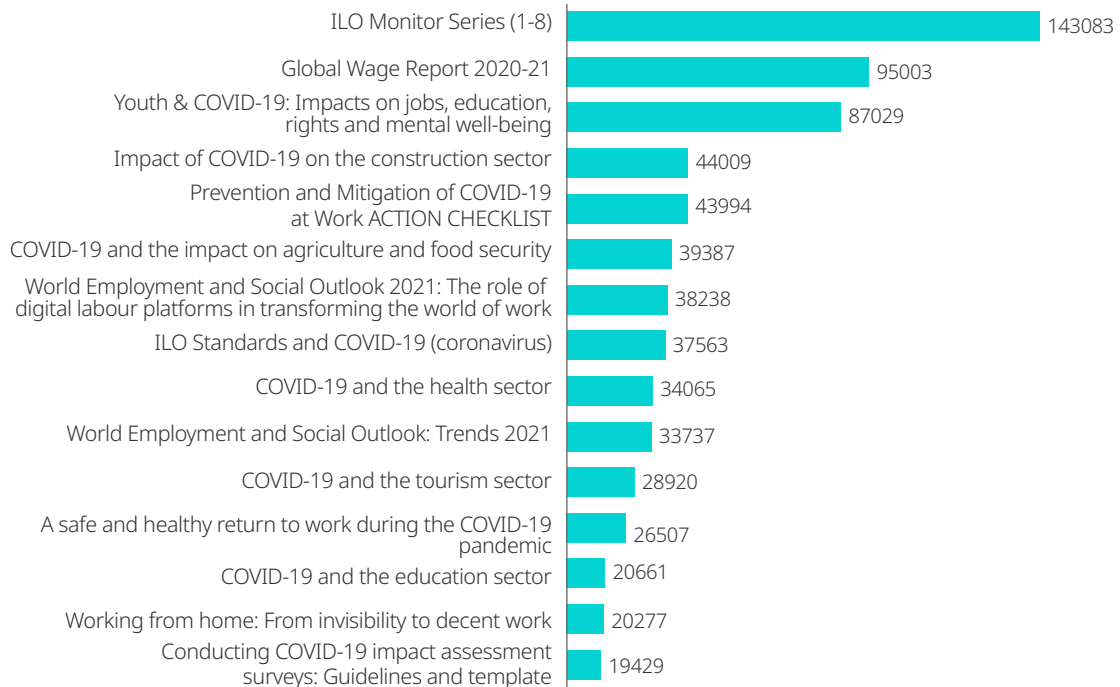
The ILO's initial four-pillar policy framework shaped its work through the early stages of the pandemic. Inspiring global action through a true tripartite agreement was the next step and, following consultation with the constituents, the Global Call to Action was formally adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021).

### The ILO's immediate response – Knowledge and policy guidance

The ILO promptly produced knowledge products to guide the constituents. In the first 18 months of the pandemic, more than 170 COVID-19-related publications were produced. These were aligned with the policy framework and included 20 sectoral briefs to assist the constituents in assessing the impact of the pandemic and highlight existing ILO instruments to help sustain enterprises and protect workers. Reviewing the available programmes, policy interventions, reports and information produced by other international organizations and countries helped shape the ILO's knowledge products to support the constituents.

In the early stages, there was a lack of coordination in knowledge product output, and questions were raised about the relevance of some products. Web analysis and surveys among the constituents revealed that some ILO knowledge products attracted significant interest. This was especially the case with the ILO Monitor on COVID-19 and the world of work series (see figure 2). It was found that 20 per cent of the ILO's COVID-19-related publications accounted for 70 per cent of all downloads. The surveyed constituents from Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific found the policy guides and tools prepared by the ILO to be more useful than those from Africa and the Arab States did.

**FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS OF THE MOST ACCESSED POLICY PUBLICATIONS**



More attention was given to the coordination of knowledge products after the Director General called for a more focused approach and a review process was introduced involving the Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P), the Department of Communication and Public Information and the Director-General's Office. Some highlighted how this more focused approach improved internal coherence. Innovative methods such as "nowcasting" were also highlighted – the ILO Monitor being the prime example.

### Action promoting inclusive economic growth and employment

The pandemic had severe effects on jobs, enterprises and skills that were felt in different ways around the world. The ILO had to accommodate this diversity.

Rapid assessments of the country-level impact of COVID-19 were conducted in 47 countries. Results were reported to have directly influenced national employment policies in several countries and were used by employers and trade union organizations to inform their members and as a foundation for dialogue with government.

A global survey that examined the experience of young people in the pandemic – including job loss and decline of working hours, effects on education and training, and mental health – received global attention.

A tool was developed and applied in 14 countries to assess reskilling and upskilling needs in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Capacity-building courses for technical and vocational education and training institutions were delivered remotely via the Turin Centre and CINTERFOR.

The threat of enterprise failure was seen as a priority. The ILO scanned global best practices in supporting enterprises, distributed weekly updates and produced recommendations to support the constituents and knowledge products to directly support enterprises.

The programmes and services of the ILO's Enterprises Department (ENTERPRISES) contributed to the ILO's response and were adapted to ensure continued delivery. For example, the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme introduced new modules in business continuity planning and OSH; value chain analyses were conducted to support recovery; a rapid assessment tool was introduced to measure impacts in the informal economy; COVID-19 resources related to responsible business conduct were developed; and a new training programme, Sustainable and Resilient Enterprises (SURE), was developed in partnership with the Bureau for Employers' Activities to strengthen the resilience of small businesses.

### Action promoting the protection of all workers

The promotion of labour standards to protect workers' rights was crucial, and the ILO made significant contributions to the reinforcement of these rights by playing a facilitating role in social dialogue and coordinating action to promote adherence to international labour standards.

The ILO strongly supported the constituents' work to promote OSH during the pandemic, culminating in the confirmation of OSH as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work by the International Labour Conference at its 110th Session (2022). The ILO's established authority in the field of OSH was reinforced among stakeholders and UN agencies, and the ILO facilitated coordination between ministries of labour and health on infectious disease control measures.

The Better Work and Safety and Health for All flagship programmes, through the Vision Zero Fund subprogramme, successfully pivoted to guide COVID-19 workplace safety and mitigation measures, reaching the garment, agriculture, construction and other sectors.

The ILO contributed to reports on global estimates on both child labour and forced labour, warning of a reversal of progress on child labour among already vulnerable populations and called for universal social protection to help end child labour. Ongoing programmes to combat child labour provided immediate support to affected communities.

Assessments of the impact of COVID-19 on informal economy workers were conducted in 15 countries and guidance was disseminated on reaching informal workers with COVID-19 safety measures. The ILO capitalized on the elevated attention being paid to the issue to accelerate national policy action on formalization.

The ILO refocused migrant worker support services to increase safety and human rights protection at destination and strengthened support for reintegration, notably through its programmes in Asia and the Pacific.

The ILO documented the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on women and vulnerable groups, for example, with research and advocacy briefs on the care economy, violence and harassment and the inclusion of diverse groups in COVID-19 mitigation. However, resources devoted to mitigating the pandemic's impacts on women workers and vulnerable groups at the country level were mainly delivered through existing programmes, such as OSH and labour standards compliance projects, rather than new initiatives.



## Action promoting universal social protection

The pandemic exposed the urgent need to build universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems. Member States introduced social protection measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, but many were temporary and insufficient. With social protection elevated on the agenda of governments, demand for ILO support increased. For instance, annual requests to strengthen unemployment protection schemes increased from 5 pre-pandemic to 29 in 2020.

The ILO reported 70 results on outcome 8 during the 2020–21 biennium. Most of these were achieved in Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The effectiveness of the ILO's social protection response to COVID-19 was rated more positively by the surveyed constituents from Asia and the Pacific than those from other regions. In November 2021, the ILO launched a regional strategy for Africa to support the constituents in their efforts to extend social protection coverage, with the aim of extending at least one social protection benefit to 40 per cent of the continent's population by 2025.

The ILO supported Member States in identifying needs and gaps, and in conducting assessments of the impact of the crisis in all regions, guided by social dialogue and the ILO normative framework. Existing programmes were adapted and new support was mobilized to reflect a shift in priorities towards building robust social protection systems able to respond to crises.

The ILO became involved in emergency cash transfer measures, giving itself an entry point to steer more sustainable system-building approaches based on ILO principles, including social dialogue. The ILO played a central role in shaping joint UN COVID-19 responses that led to the delivery of cash transfers and temporary wage subsidies in 20 Member States. However, in some countries, the funds were only partly disbursed. Some noted that working in this area required speed and agility rooted in a strategic intent, an operating framework and organizational capacities that the ILO may currently lack.

The ILO contributed towards national social protection strategies and legislation; promoted the integration of contributory and tax-funded measures to extend coverage; improved information management systems; and supported financial sustainability checks and feasibility studies on the extension of coverage, including to workers in the informal economy. The crisis highlighted the need for social protection to adequately consider the risks that hit communities at large and could jeopardize governments' capacity to develop social protection in normal times.

The ILO supported social protection interventions for vulnerable groups, including informal workers, refugees, migrants, people with disabilities and those living with HIV. Over half of the ILO's COVID-19-related social protection interventions were reported to have contributed to gender equality.

## Aligning ILO action with UN and global responses, including the Sustainable Development Goals

Although the call for greater multilateral collaboration expressed in policy statements has stimulated partnerships at the field level and high-level agreements, these have so far generated only a small proportion of the UN funding required for the COVID-19 recovery.

Calls for new models of development financing have highlighted the ILO's relatively limited capacity in this field. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need to move forward with whole-of-government approaches, not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process as well. To achieve this, the ILO will need greater expertise in applying a whole-of-government approach to economic and financial planning. The ILO also lacks the human resources to manage the workload associated with the many new cooperation agreements and partnerships, especially at the country level.

Agreements include the United Nations Development Programme-ILO Framework for Action, which prioritizes actions between the two partners that would increase synergy, and other global and regional partnerships with the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); the World Health Organization; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Despite the new impetus provided by the pandemic for improved collaboration and policy coherence between multilateral agencies, barriers and disincentives remain.

The ILO played a prominent role in high-level meetings of the G7, the G20 and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa), and in drafting the Just Transition Declaration, which was endorsed by more than 30 nations at the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Scotland in October–November 2021. In February 2022, a three-day ILO Global Forum for a Human-centred Recovery addressed the need for multilateral policy coherence, which catalysed additional commitments from various parts of the UN and the multilateral system.

At the country level, the ILO was reported to have influenced over 120 plans within the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, although it is difficult to substantiate this or to estimate the degree of influence achieved.

The Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, launched by the UN Secretary-General and the ILO, aims to create at least 400 million jobs and extend social protection floors to the 4 billion people currently not covered. The scope and scale of the initiative have huge resource implications for the ILO and for the UN system.

## KEY FINDINGS BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Relevance

#### KEY FINDING 1:

The ILO's management and governance systems adapted well to changed circumstances, ensured that constituent engagement and support were maintained, and introduced new systems to allow staff to continue to work.

#### KEY FINDING 2:

Coordination to develop policy guides and knowledge products was initially lacking, but this was addressed, and some guides and products proved to be of global relevance.

#### KEY FINDING 3:

In the crisis phase, the ILO worked with its constituents to promote safety and health at the workplace, developed resources to support employment and enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in this work.

The ILO's overall institutional response enabled the Organization to adapt to a dramatically altered operational landscape and to reinvent the way it delivered services to its constituents. The situation called for quick management decisions, often with imperfect information, and a willingness to change course as the situation evolved. Constituent engagement remained the highest priority and continued through virtual meetings and conferences. New systems and processes were introduced

to ensure that ILO staff were safe and could continue to work. The ILO gave relevant support to workers' and employers' organizations as they grappled with the crisis, including in respect of addressing OSH issues, maintaining continuity of services for their members, and enhancing their relevance through new tools and resources.

The four-pillar policy framework set out a relevant programme logic that was sequenced initially to facilitate understanding of and to address the immediate effects of the pandemic on the world of work, and then to contribute to a human-centred recovery underpinned by social dialogue and international labour standards.

While there was some over-enthusiasm in the generation of policy guides and knowledge products in the early stages, this was soon addressed. Some guides and products, especially the ILO Monitor and the many sectoral and employment papers, proved to be relevant at a global level, while COVID-19 OSH resources and the guidelines produced to support countries in conducting rapid assessments of the pandemic impacts, were applied locally.

As the synthesis review showed, existing development cooperation projects were generally able to remain relevant. Global programmes and interventions could more readily adjust delivery mechanisms and respond to new priorities than could smaller, one-off projects, which did what they could within their scope.

The ILO worked with its constituents to promote safety and health at the workplace, developed resources to support enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Towards the goal of leaving no one behind, major programmes – such as the Better Work and Safety and Health for All flagship programmes, enterprise programmes (including support for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives) and the migrant workers portfolio – integrated gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives. In some countries, COVID-19 response projects and social protection interventions supported employment and skills development for women, persons with disabilities, refugees, people living with HIV and indigenous communities.

As demonstrated by the synthesis review, the ILO's recovery actions are currently under way. Evaluating their relevance is complicated by a number of factors: the pandemic is still ongoing; there is a variance in recovery rates and countries' capability to respond; and the world is dealing with new crises, including war, supply chain disruptions, and energy and food shortages. In this context, the ILO's actions will need to remain responsive to continuous, unpredictable change, and not just respond to the damage left by the pandemic.

## Coherence

### KEY FINDING 4:

The pandemic led to some improved collaboration and policy coherence in the ILO. Collaborative structures and multidisciplinary work teams were established to good effect, with the four-pillar framework focusing effort and creating synergies.

### KEY FINDING 5:

Internal teamwork and more frequent engagement between headquarters and the field were enhanced by the increased use of virtual meetings.

### KEY FINDING 6:

Work in the pandemic continued to cohere with social dialogue principles and with international labour standards.

### KEY FINDING 7:

New collaboration opportunities with UN agencies and multilateral partners emerged, but more work and resources are needed if their potential is to be realized. In the field, high-level agreements did not always translate to a more prominent role for the ILO.

The high-level evaluation found that the pandemic played a catalytic role in improving internal collaboration and policy coherence. The synthesis review found that the pandemic had created a “new imperative for the ILO to work as one” and had “led to strengthened internal collaboration”. There was a perception that, when faced with a crisis, the ILO had an inherent capacity to break out of its silos and galvanize around a common cause. Examples were given of this crisis-induced esprit de corps, such as the collaborative effort required to produce the ILO Monitor.

However, collaboration did not just spontaneously “break out” across the Organization. For example, the production of policy papers and guides became better coordinated after a call from the Director-General for stronger coherence and visibility in the production pipeline, and for enhanced focus and usefulness of the knowledge products. The ad hoc review process of COVID-19-related knowledge products proved to be effective overall and was found to be an improvement over the previous publication review process. Some regretted that this process was not sustained and institutionalized after 2020.

Paradoxically, the physical distancing imposed as a result of COVID-19 may have also helped bring the ILO closer together. More frequent and responsive virtual engagement between headquarters specialists and staff and constituents in the field similarly improved organizational coherence, even though it increased workload. Virtual meetings of Global Technical Teams were held more regularly to discuss COVID-19 impacts and to collectively develop responses. ENTERPRISES even organized, through the Turin Centre, a virtual Sustainable Enterprises Exhibition to “unlock synergies and scale effects” in the department’s work, and to develop a new high-level policy strategy.

The ILO worked to ensure that its institutional governance and policy responses were based on tripartism and supported by international labour standards, which were used as a “decent work compass” for the ILO’s response. Examples included support for a coherent tripartite response to

the crisis faced by maritime workers and the updating of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, the COVID-19-related work on the health and tourism sectors, and the addition of OSH as a fifth category of fundamental principles and rights at work. Policy actions cohered with the Centenary Declaration and programme and budget, and broadly aligned with country programme outcomes and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

New mechanisms for coherence and collaboration with other UN agencies and multilateral partners emerged, but will require substantial work, and more resources, to realize benefits. High-level agreements and collaborative mechanisms were established in the UN system but, at the country level, the ILO was not always able to play as prominent a role as it would have liked, even if it was the logical and mandated agency to do so. Its relative lack of resources at the country level, particularly in non-resident countries, was reported to restrict the scope of its activities. Successful examples and lessons learned from joint UN projects linked to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund are found in the synthesis review.

## Effectiveness

### KEY FINDING 8:

The Office's planning and reporting systems did not adequately track its COVID-19 response. Adjustments were made to these systems, but results were poorly reported.

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### KEY FINDING 9:

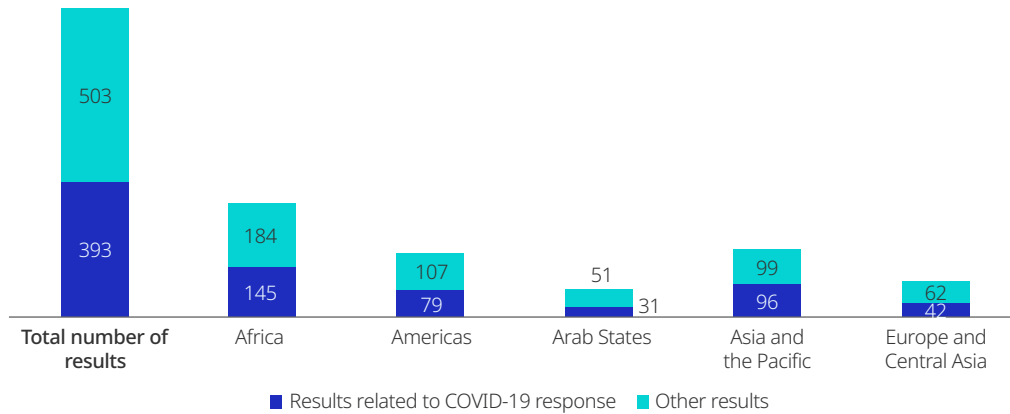
Innovative knowledge products were cited as being highly influential and elevated the ILO's profile as an authoritative source of labour market data.

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### KEY FINDING 10:

Good results were identified across all the key policy areas in supporting both national policy development, and programmes and measures to address the immediate impacts of the crisis.

The ILO was only partially successful in adapting its planning and reporting systems to track its COVID-19 response and measure its effectiveness. Making sense of programme and budget performance reports in their coverage of the COVID-19 response was especially challenging. Tracking adjustments were made to the monitoring and reporting system, but results were often poorly reported. In the end, the ILO decided to maintain its existing approach, tweaking its planning and reporting systems to capture some COVID-19-related detail, but largely reporting as usual on programme and budget results. This approach resulted in 45 per cent of projects being identified as contributing to the COVID-19 response in the report on ILO programme implementation 2020–21 (figure 3).<sup>7</sup>

**FIGURE 3: CONTRIBUTION OF RESULTS TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE, TOTAL AND BY REGION**

Qualitative reporting of the ILO's pandemic response, both within the report on ILO programme implementation 2020–21 and in documents presented to the Governing Body, showcased highlights of the ILO's work, but said little about "lowlights" – aspects of this work that were ineffective. Such deficiencies in reporting were acknowledged by staff interviewed, who often stressed the importance of getting it right next time.

Evaluation procedures were updated and protocols were produced to ensure continued accountability and learning from evaluations.<sup>8</sup> The synthesis review was carried out in three phases and results were published for each phase to provide real-time learning on the effectiveness of the ILO's operations in responding to the effects of the pandemic.

The ILO made great efforts to support employers' and workers' organizations in continuing to operate and service their members during the crisis. In high-level evaluation case study countries, the constituents were positive about the effectiveness of these efforts, highlighting, for example, the value of information shared on international practices, guides for members on OSH, telework and online payments; and support for improved policy advocacy and the maintenance of social dialogue.

The high-level evaluation found examples of effective policy actions. Knowledge products were an early focus, and while measuring their effectiveness is difficult, some were innovative and were cited as being influential. The ILO's knowledge output elevated its profile as an authoritative source of labour market data, and its outreach, public engagement and media coverage grew substantially.

8 ILO, Implications of COVID-19 on Evaluations in the ILO; and ILO, [Protocol on Collecting Evaluative Evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 Response Measures through Project and Programme Evaluations](#), 2020.

Work in support of inclusive economic growth and employment allowed the effects of the pandemic on national labour markets to be better understood, with insights incorporated into national employment policies and programmes, youth employment strategies, enterprise support measures, sectoral responses, skills systems and support for vulnerable groups. Work supporting the protection of all workers helped the constituents to implement their immediate COVID-19 responses in the field of OSH, including in the most-affected sectors and occupations, to tackle the negative effects of the pandemic on fundamental principles and rights at work, on informality, and on women and vulnerable workers. Universal social protection was given new prominence, and the ILO used its policy expertise to support new coverage in several countries (including for vulnerable groups and women), and to position the ILO with international financial institutions and in the UN system to further expand this work. Within the UN and the multilateral system, collaborative project efforts had mixed results, but the ILO has forged new agreements and partnerships that could enhance results over the long term.

## Efficiency

### KEY FINDING 11:

The ILO quickly reinvented its service delivery model, achieving efficiencies of scale in supporting the constituents, as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies.

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### KEY FINDING 12:

Budget flexibility allowed adaptations while maintaining accountability, and funding partners were open to project adjustments. Some inefficiencies were reported in the speed of the mobilization of resources, including human resources.

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### KEY FINDING 13:

Major programmes (such as the Better Work flagship programme and the SCORE programme) were generally better able to make delivery adjustments than smaller, one-off projects were.

The ILO managed the crisis in an efficient and timely way, reinventing its service delivery model, defining a coherent policy framework and asserting its position as a global authority on the pandemic's effects on the world of work. The digitization of its services was accelerated, enabling it to achieve efficiencies of scale in the delivery of constituent support – as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies – through remote engagement and less travel. The ILO established new systems, equipping staff to work remotely and ensuring workplace safety. New intervention models were introduced that streamlined support to the constituents (for example, the development of global products that EBMOs could adapt for local use). The right balance between face-to-face and remote servicing will need to be struck as pandemic restrictions ease, but it was generally agreed that the ILO would not return to its pre-pandemic mode of operation. The ILO's human resources management response played a vital role in ensuring business continuity, though delays in staff mobilization were sometimes raised by staff and the constituents as an obstacle to a timely response.

At the governance level, the ILO was able to adapt its mechanisms for decision-making and constituent engagement and achieved some new efficiencies that could be continued. Other engagement with the constituents, including at the International Labour Conference, was also efficiently maintained online, although some countries reported difficulties in connecting, due to ILO access procedures or inadequate local internet access.

The ILO established procedures to support budget flexibility while still maintaining accountability. Funding partners were briefed, and they proved to be open to the changes the ILO proposed. Project staff in countries were not always able to adapt their projects to their new circumstances as fully as they would have liked, but they were generally able to adjust delivery modes and some outputs efficiently and to reasonable effect.

## Impact and sustainability

### KEY FINDING 14:

Although it will take time for the impacts of the ILO's COVID-19 response work to be fully revealed, the Organization took advantage of the renewed impetus for reform in some key policy areas to rapidly advance its agenda – the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work is one example.

### KEY FINDING 15:

The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions could also have transformative impacts, but these will depend on strong partnerships and will require substantial financing.

### KEY FINDING 16:

Openness to the adaptive management approach used during the pandemic needs to be maintained, especially – but not exclusively – in crisis situations.

Measuring the impact and sustainability of the ILO's policy actions will require more time. However, having received a “wake-up call” on aspects of the Decent Work Agenda, many countries are now more alert to the need for action. Progress in respect of impacts is already evident in some areas, where the pandemic has given further emphasis to ongoing ILO advocacy efforts. A prime example is the inclusion, at the 110th Session (2022) of the International Labour Conference, of a safe and healthy working environment as a fifth category of rights in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work.

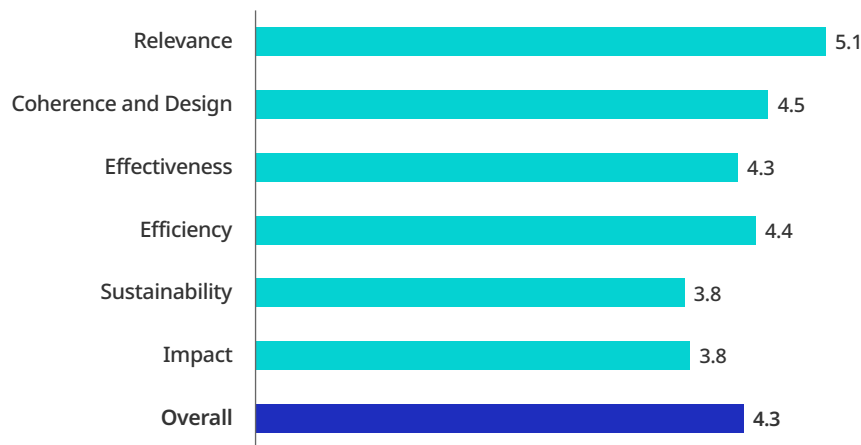
There is also renewed impetus for cooperation between the ILO and other UN agencies, multilateral partners and international financial institutions that could allow the reach and scale of the ILO's efforts in these areas to be extended. The Global Forum for a Human-centred Recovery, held in February 2022, added to this impetus. The ILO has conducted substantial groundwork for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, which may have huge impacts on the development of social protection systems and employment. But it is still in its early days and, given the resource constraints and continuing collaboration barriers, these impacts may not materialize. As has been seen in some policy areas, such as ensuring a just transition, there can be a major gap between stated policy goals and what can actually be delivered on the ground.



The ILO has emerged from the initial crisis phase of the pandemic with experience in adapting its operations quickly. The transferability of this experience is never certain, as every major disruption brings unique challenges. What can and should be sustained is an openness to the adaptive approach that the ILO has employed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such an approach was by no means guaranteed, and a more conservative “wait-and-see” response might easily have been adopted exactly at the time when the ILO needed to step forward. As one Department Director said: “We were lucky to have good leadership, but we need to formalize this approach. We need a statement of ‘this is what we do’ and not just hope for the best.”

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

**FIGURE 4: EVALUATION OF THE ILO’S RESPONSE TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 (2020–22): RATINGS BY CRITERION**



6 = Highly satisfactory, 5 = Satisfactory, 4 = Somewhat satisfactory, 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory, 2 = Unsatisfactory, 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

Note: Based on several criteria, specific scoring sheet available from EVAL upon request.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ New work practices can enhance the interaction of headquarters with the field and its understanding of the lived experience of the constituents and programme beneficiaries. This can lead to a more practical and less academic approach, improving relevance, effectiveness and potential impact.

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- ▶ The pandemic forced the ILO to produce agile and innovative responses in its service delivery. Now, the Organization is better placed to encourage a culture of continuous improvement that follows this approach.

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- ▶ The crisis response showed that leadership and putting in place the right collaborative structures can improve organizational coherence and break down silos. The leaps taken in the development of the ILO's technological capacity can facilitate this.

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- ▶ The digital delivery of ILO services offers the opportunity to expand reach and scale, but there is a digital divide, especially in low-income countries, and the accessibility of these services needs to be considered.

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- ▶ The monitoring and reporting of crisis response actions, which by nature are conceived and implemented quickly and outside normal planning time frames, need to be improved.

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- ▶ The pandemic will have an enduring effect on the ILO's service delivery approach, reducing travel and allowing engagement with the constituents more regularly and directly through online means. However, in-person missions still bring many benefits in addition to those achieved by online contacts.

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- ▶ Before the pandemic, OSH was mainly associated with industrial safety and hygiene, such as the prevention of occupational accidents. The pandemic has highlighted additional dimensions, such as mental health in the workplace, which have not received sufficient attention.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations concerning the institutional response to COVID-19

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

Continue to strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective global, regional and national post-pandemic recovery policies and actions.


Adjust the ILO Institutional Capacity Development Strategy to meet the needs of the constituents in a post-pandemic world, ensuring that the constituents are as well equipped as possible to develop policy responses and to offer innovative services related to the trends accelerated by COVID-19. Emphasis could be placed, for example on: formalizing the use of digital tools; developing teleworking policies and guides (including to build capacity to influence legislation and to engage in collective bargaining on this subject); developing crisis and risk management systems; protecting and enhancing employment opportunities for vulnerable groups; strengthening the economic case for employment-rich investments, particularly in the care, digital and green economies; sectoral recovery actions; improving productivity and promoting innovation in enterprises; and curbing the spread of informality. The Office should seek the right balance between online and face-to-face approaches to capacity-building by assessing their comparative impacts and barriers to digital training.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Deputy Director-General for Field Operations (DDG/FOP), Bureau for Workers' Activities, Bureau for Employers' Activities, DDG/P, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), Turin Centre		Short-term	Medium

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy encompassing both headquarters and the field.


In addition to the ILO's current risk management and business continuity plans, use the experience accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy to deal with any future global calamity that might have far-reaching and sustained impacts on service delivery. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of adaptive management principles and the possible need to temporarily step away from established procedures (and associated risks) and devise a resource mobilization plan (including human resources) or strategy for crisis situations to facilitate a rapid response to country offices and national constituents in crises. The ILO should also urge regional and country offices to review and adjust their existing business continuity and contingency plans in the light of the lessons drawn at the local level regarding responsiveness to the COVID-19 crisis, which was uneven.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, DDG/MR, Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Treasurer and Financial Comptroller		Short-term	High

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

Expand and mainstream more broadly the approach to cross-departmental teamwork demonstrated in the pandemic and continue the efficient and effective management and governance practices that were introduced.


Building on the successful collaboration models introduced during the pandemic, establish more structured mechanisms, driven by the Director-General and senior management, to drive policy coherence and organizational synergy (such as cross-departmental work teams and more frequent and structured interactions between policy portfolio directors and regional directors). The ILO should also nurture Global Technical Teams as communities of practice and mutual support. This focus on policy coherence would align with the institutional guidelines on the next programme and budget. More broadly, the ILO should review any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness that flowed from management and governance arrangements introduced during the pandemic, with a view to formalizing their ongoing application post-pandemic.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, PROGRAM		Short-term	Medium

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Enhance the ILO's capacity to monitor, report and evaluate crisis response actions that are developed and implemented outside the normal programming cycle.

In the context of tracking the progress of human-centred recovery, the Governing Body has stressed the need for "evidence-based assessments of the quantity, quality and social inclusivity of the recovery at the country level and to examine how the recovery strategies can be improved". However, this high-level evaluation found the ILO's tracking of its own COVID 19 response actions to be lacking. The ILO needs to develop a process to adequately adjust plans when operational circumstances have been severely disrupted (for example, by revising the theory of change, taking major disruptive risks into consideration). Reporting needs to clearly describe actions and their effects to respond immediately and to envision recovery or structural change. Evaluation processes and their funding also need to better capture the impact of crisis recovery actions by adopting a longer-term approach that allows assessments to be made two or three years down the road, not just at the conclusion of projects.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, DDG/FOP, PROGRAM, PARDEV, Research Department, EVAL		Medium-term	Medium

### RECOMMENDATION 5

**Strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to respond to systemic crises through universal social protection.**

The Governing Body should re-emphasize the leadership role of the ILO in ensuring universal social protection in the light of current and future crises, and support Member States in implementing the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). This can be done, among other things, by building capacities to prepare and respond to systemic crises and shocks through social protection measures that target, inter alia, vulnerable groups and the informal sector. The Office should clarify how the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All will contribute to adapting social protection systems to new and emerging challenges. It should also provide details of the strategic position and modalities under which it should offer at least the basic guarantees of income and health protection to all, including women and vulnerable groups.

The ILO should clarify its role in emergency situations in this area and consider the importance of having a seat at the table when a crisis strikes. The ILO's unique comparative advantages should be promoted by UN resident coordinators and the ILO should collaborate with UN partners and international financial institutions to shape a common understanding and vision of shock-responsive social protection systems in interventions that are systemic and catalytic. The ILO should continue to ensure strong leadership in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, including by: contributing to the mobilization of target resources; leveraging its networks of constituents, the UN system and partners through international social protection platforms such as the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board; and strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions and ministries of finance.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Social Protection Department (SOCPRO), DDG/P, DWTs and country offices (COs), DDG/FOP		Long-term	Medium

### RECOMMENDATION 6

**Continue to strengthen the constituents' capacities to sustain international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work for workers, even during a crisis, and develop inclusive, gender-responsive policies for the protection of workers in insecure forms of work.**

The impact of the crisis on health and care workers, and transnational workers in the transport and maritime industries, exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in these highly exposed sectors. Together with its social partners, the ILO should work with Member States to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies that are applicable at all times, especially during crises, that are rights-based and intersectional to protect key workers.


Responding to the urgent need to provide protection for emerging diverse forms of work, the ILO needs to accelerate support for gender-responsive national legislation and labour administration systems in respect of the protection of wages, working time, care responsibilities, safety and health, the elimination of violence and harassment, and inclusive access to social protection. The ILO should work with other development partners at the global and national levels to address decent work deficits, paying special attention to those made particularly vulnerable by the crisis.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), Sectoral Policies Department, Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), SOCPRO, COs, Conditions of Work and Equality Department, DDG/P		Medium-to-long-term	Medium

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

The ILO should more clearly integrate a just transition into its post-pandemic employment and skills development strategies and actions, and use its experience and expertise to implement approaches with maximum potential for impact. It should pursue financing and delivery partnerships with organizations with resources to help bring a just transition to scale.

A just transition needs to be incorporated into a broader range of the ILO's employment and skills development strategies and actions in the post-pandemic recovery (including for young people, women and vulnerable groups). While the high-level agreements, transition guidelines, manuals and training courses already devised are all necessary, they are far from sufficient. Countries considering just transition processes have found that the ILO has committed very few resources in this area, and that available staff would be insufficient to support the complex social dialogue necessary to generate support for radical change. The surveys conducted as part of the high-level evaluation found that there was a strong perception that the ILO was underperforming in this important area. In the absence of sufficient ILO presence in-country, it is considered likely that other agencies will enter the process, but with limited perspective, no tripartite mandate and inadequate experience.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, ENTERPRISES, Employment Policy Department, GOVERNANCE, Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS), SOCPRO		Long-term	High

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

The ILO should review its current capacity to deliver on the whole-of-government approach and new models of development financing, focusing on the scale and distribution of workload implied by its agreements as part of the UN COVID-19 response (including with both UN and other multilateral organizations), and devise a prioritized and specific plan to meet the resource requirements, including at the country level.

Calls for new models and higher levels of development financing have highlighted the ILO's relatively limited capacity in this field, particularly with international development banks and funds. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need to move forward with whole-of-government approaches, not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process as well. To achieve these ambitious goals, the ILO will need greater financing expertise.

Furthermore, the ILO currently lacks the human resources to manage the workload associated with its many new cooperation agreements and partnerships, especially at the country level. If these agreements are to deliver on the bold development results projected, the ILO will need to scale up its operations and presence, particularly at the country level. It appears unlikely that this can be achieved efficiently through the widespread use of short-term contract staff or consultancies.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS, PARDEV, PROGRAM, DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Human Resources Development Department (HRD)		Medium-to-long-term	High



# 02

## ▶ Introduction

## ▶ Introduction

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### BACKGROUND

In March 2020, just a few months after it began its second century of operations, the ILO faced an unimagined new world. The COVID-19 pandemic had plunged the world into a crisis of unprecedented scope and scale. Lockdowns, mobility restrictions, and disruptions to global trade saw economic activity halted and the global economy shrink. Over the next two years, global poverty would increase for the first time in a generation. Inequality would grow within and between nations.<sup>10</sup> Nearly six and a half million people would lose their lives to the disease.<sup>11</sup>

The world of work was devastated by this health and economic crisis. Full or partial lockdowns affected billions of businesses and workers, jobs disappeared, and working hours and incomes dropped precipitously. Many of those who continued to work had to deal with a new and potentially deadly health risk. Gaps in social protection coverage and the human consequences of these were exposed, particularly among those in the informal economy. Enterprises failed or faced closure, especially those operating in the hardest-hit sectors.<sup>12</sup>

The damage caused by the crisis was uneven. Women, young people, and other groups who were already disadvantaged in the labour market were disproportionately affected. While some workers were able to switch to telework and could maintain their income, this was not an option for many others. Furthermore, the fiscal and technical capacities of countries to respond to the initial crisis and to quickly restore employment and economic growth were unequal. Fears emerged of a “great divergence” in the paths of higher and lower income countries.<sup>13</sup>

Initially, as the crisis unfolded, the ILO worked with constituents to support the safety of workers and the sustainability of businesses and jobs. Then its focus turned to promoting a human-centred recovery founded on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, international labour standards, and social dialogue.

The challenges faced by the ILO were twofold. First, the ILO had to **adapt as an institution** to its changed operating environment. To continue to operate, it needed to work out how it would manage global operations in a period of uncertainty and unpredictable change, how its unique governance processes would continue, how its staff could continue to do their jobs, how resources would be sourced or re-allocated, and how it would support constituents in their work.

Second, the ILO needed to **re-focus its policy work** on the new needs and priorities of its constituents. Work plans would need to be adapted, strategies revised, new research and knowledge products developed, and technical support given that would help constituents design and support response strategies across multiple policy domains. It would also need to engage and cooperate with other UN agencies and development actors in the massive task of rebuilding the world of work.

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10. World Bank, World Development Report 2022: Finance for an Equitable Recovery (2022, p. 1).

11. NCoV2019, [World COVID-19 Stats](#), database, accessed 30 June 2022.

12. ILO, “[COVID-19 and the world of work, 3rd Edition](#)”, ILO Monitor, 29 April 2020.

13. ILO, [Great divergence threatens economic and employment recovery](#), 2021.



## ABOUT THE HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION

To support the evaluation of the ILO's strategic response to the pandemic, in November 2020, the ILO's Governing Body (GB) approved a recommendation to conduct a high-level evaluation (HLE) of the ILO's response to COVID-19 to be conducted in 2022. HLEs are governance-level evaluations that aim to generate insights into organizational performance within the context of the ILO's results-based management system. Findings from HLEs can help ensure accountability and contribute to future decision-making on policies and strategies, and institutional arrangements.

While the pandemic is by no means over, the HLE came at a time when many Member States had emerged from waves of lockdowns and were looking at what their response would be in the medium to long term. At the same time, they are now grappling with the compounding effects of new crises including the war in Ukraine, food and energy shortages, global inflation, climate change.

In this context the HLE aims to provide the ILO's constituents with:

- ▶ Findings on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the world of work and how the ILO has adapted and strengthened its work in response to these changes.
- ▶ Analysis of key lessons from the ILO's COVID-19 responses, documenting good practices to bolster the evidence base for future programming and evaluations.
- ▶ Recommendations on how to support Member States in providing a fully inclusive and sustainable recovery from the crisis.
- ▶ Accountability on the ILO's response and the extent of its alignment with the ILO Centenary Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The **scope of the HLE** is broad, covering relevant ILO **policy action** from the onset of the pandemic from March 2020 to March 2022. This includes work carried out at headquarters (HQ) and the field. It also looks at the **institutional dimension** of the ILO's response insofar as it pertains to the delivery of its mandate and implementation of its strategies (namely, it does not fully evaluate such things as the ILO's HR practices, teleworking, and so on, although these are touched on in the evaluation's narrative).

The **principal client** for the evaluation is the GB, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at HQ, as well as Directors and staff of field offices. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO constituents, donors, partners and policy-makers.

## METHODOLOGY

### Evaluation framework and questions

In line with the evaluation framework and protocol produced by EVAL on the collection of evaluative evidence on ILO's COVID-19 response measures,<sup>14</sup> the HLE considers two "evaluative dimensions" of the response: (a) ILO's institutional readiness, adaptability and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner; and (b) ILO's policy action at national, regional and global levels.

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14. ILO, [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#) (Evaluation Office, 2020).

The HLEs in ILO take a summative as well as formative approach. They provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (summative). They are also forward looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework (formative).

The evaluation applied a theory of change (ToC) and outcome-based approaches as the analytical frameworks against which processes, and results were measured. The ToC behind ILO's COVID-19 responses (covering actions both in the crisis phase and recovery phase) was (re)constructed at the inception phase.

Key evaluation questions for both these dimensions, based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, guided the HLE's work. These are included in Annex B: Evaluation questions.

### Data collection methods

The methodology was based on the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in April 2016.

The evaluation was participatory. It paid specific attention to responding to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality responsiveness and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, a gender and inclusion dimension as well as environmental issues and social dialogue were considered as cross-cutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. This implied involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover, the evaluators reviewed data and information disaggregated by sex and assessed the relevance and effectiveness of gender-responsiveness and disability-inclusion-related strategies and outcomes.

Mixed methods were applied to draw on multiple lines of evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and multiple means of analysis to triangulate findings. Four main methods were used for collecting evaluation data: (a) document review; (b) interviews; (c) surveys; and (d) case studies. Data were assessed using both qualitative and, where appropriate, quantitative approaches. Continuing COVID-19 travel restrictions meant that interviews by the evaluation team were undertaken remotely and via national consultants based in the case study countries.

### Document review

Relevant policy, strategy, and management documents and web pages related to the ILO response were reviewed as well as the tools, policy guides and research papers prepared to support the ILO's constituents. Data on website views and downloads were analysed and the Overton tool was used to measure citations and mentions to assess the dissemination and influence of knowledge products related to COVID-19.

In preparation for the HLE, a phased synthesis review was started in early 2021 which examined in two rounds a purposive sample of 41 evaluation reports to collect evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures. A third round looking at another 46 recent project evaluation reports was completed concurrently with the HLE.

The HLE analysed Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), global products, programmes and projects that included elements responding to COVID-19 and the resources applied. Data were provided by the ILO FINANCE and PROGRAM departments to inform this exercise as well as qualitative reports on actions and achievements.

## Interviews

Interviews were held with 354 (47 per cent female) constituents, staff, funding partners and other ILO partners including:

- ▶ ILO staff and senior management in Geneva;
- ▶ High-level representatives of employers' and workers' organizations (namely, IOE and ITUC);
- ▶ ILO regional and country office staff;
- ▶ International partners and other UN organizations collaborating with the ILO on COVID-19-related initiatives;
- ▶ Country-level stakeholders (governments, workers' and employers' organizations, project stakeholders). **See Annex A: Interviews.**

Interviews were semi-structured based on the evaluation matrix and guided by tailored questions. Country-specific data collection templates were developed by the international evaluation consultants to guide the work of national consultants.

## Surveys

In addition to an initial scoping survey distributed to ILO management and staff in early 2022, surveys focused on key evaluation questions that were sent to staff and constituents in May and June 2022. The response rate for the staff survey was 13 per cent (292 responses) and for the constituent survey was 8.5 per cent (129 responses). A summary of findings is included in Annex D: Results of staff and constituent surveys.

## Case Studies

Case studies were conducted in eight countries (Argentina, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and Viet Nam) and one subregional group of countries (the Western Balkans). "Topical" case studies were also conducted that explored the ILO COVID-19 response in terms of social dialogue, the role played by ITCILO and CINTERFOR, knowledge management and research, the role of standards (a study of the Seafarers/Maritime Sector), UN reform and engagement with partners, and Green Jobs and Just Transition.

More details on the HLE's methodology are set out in Annex C: Methodology, which is an integral part of this report.

## Data limitations

The evaluation experienced some delays due to difficulties in connecting with stakeholders and the need to engage, brief and manage national consultants. In some countries, there were delays that led to curtailed interview phases and limited ability to interview some stakeholders and collect sufficient data and information.

The evaluation exposed some inadequacies in the ILO's Results-Based Management systems in tracking and reporting on COVID-specific responses. Results were often poorly reported, limiting the evaluation's ability to conduct detailed analyses of outcomes.

The breadth of topics, policy areas, programmes and services covered by the evaluation meant that not all could be covered in equal depth.



# 03

- ▶ Institutional response to the pandemic

## ▶ Institutional response to the pandemic

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### NAVIGATING THE CRISIS

#### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The ILO had recent experience dealing with global natural, economic and health emergencies, but the scale and nature of COVID-19 were something new. None of the existing risk management and business continuity plans and procedures offered a roadmap that ILO management could use to navigate this pandemic.
- ▶ ILO management responded well to the uncertainty and unpredictable change brought by the crisis. Its crisis-management approach demonstrated agility, flexibility and a willingness to continuously adapt.
- ▶ Organizational leadership was key, especially in its willingness to make quick decisions when not all relevant information was available.

Well before 11 March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), the ILO was considering and preparing for its potential impact. Recent experience with other health crises had placed it on alert. The H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic of 2009, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus outbreak (MERS-CoV) of 2012, the Western African Ebola virus epidemic of 2013–2014, and the avian influenza epidemic in the People's Republic of China of 2013–2019 had all affected the ILO's work to varying degrees. Some regional offices, such as the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, had fresh memories of these crises and had begun to work with ILO HQ as this new threat emerged in the region.

Despite this alertness to the impending crisis, none of the policies, plans and procedures that were in place at the onset of the pandemic could fully prepare the Organization for the global scale and impact of COVID-19. The ILO's risk-management framework and policy<sup>15</sup> considered the onset of a pandemic as a background threat in its strategic risk register. Country Office Business Continuity Plans had also been in place since 2014 which were designed "to ensure effective crisis decision-making of its senior management" and "uninterrupted continuation of ILO critical operations".<sup>16</sup> But none of these provided a roadmap that ILO management could use to navigate COVID-19 – it was different from anything anyone envisaged. Uncertainty and confusion were everywhere, and there was no checklist that could be used that would make things any clearer. The situation demanded agility, flexibility and a willingness to continuously assess the situation and adapt. As a 2021 report from the ILO's Risk Office concluded, in such situations "crisis management is more important than Business Continuity Planning."<sup>17</sup> Staff and constituents surveyed in the HLE agreed that the ILO was not well prepared for the crisis (see paras. 214 and 220). Development cooperation evaluations corroborate this finding at country level.

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15. <https://intranet.ilo.org/en-us/trcf/Pages/risk-management.aspx> (accessible to ILO staff only)

16. Director-General's announcement, IGDS Number 321 (Version 1), 15 March 2013.

17. Anthony Barrow, *Business continuity in the field – lessons learnt from COVID-19*, 2021, 1.

The ILO was quick to recognize the need for such a crisis management response. From late February 2020, when the first signs appeared of what was to come, senior managers reviewed existing risk and business continuity documents and decided that they were not especially helpful – as one put it “it became apparent the old play books were not relevant”. An existing Crisis Management Team (CMT) led by the senior managers in HQ was re-convened and met every day at 09:00 for two years from the first day of the pandemic. The CMT was initially chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Management and Reform (DDG/MR), but the Director General (DG) soon chaired it himself, leading the development of the institutional and policy response at the highest level.

An expanded Global Management Team (GMT) was also mobilized to help devise, coordinate and communicate the ILO's institutional and policy response. It acted as a conduit for information on the pandemic's uneven impacts in the field and on emerging regional and national priorities. These included maintaining connectivity with constituents during lockdown, ensuring staff welfare, engaging with UN partners, and supporting field operations. The membership of the GMT – normally comprising the DG, the three DDGs, the Director of the International Training Centre (ITCILO) in Turin, and the five regional directors – was expanded to include other key HQ executives with major roles in implementing the ILO's response (for example, the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller, Directors of HRD and PROGRAM). The GMT met every week and was an important mechanism in keeping the Organization unified to make decisions, communicate, and to adapt to a changing world. Connection at a country level was also strengthened, for example, through a series of five discussions between HQ senior managers with Country Directors in October 2020. As one senior manager said, “it was so important to draw the strands of the Office together, to hear from the field and to identify the global priorities”. Without constant communication with the regions, another said, “there were real concerns that the organization would fragment.”

The operating environment of these management teams was one of constant uncertainty. Nobody knew at the time how long the crisis would last and when “business as usual” could resume. Business continuity plans are generally predicated on the assumption that, after a crisis hit, things would return to normal in a relatively short time. Those interviewed for the HLE said that nobody dreamt the situation would last for over two years and that dealing with its unpredictable twists and turns would become a constant challenge.

Management processes and procedures that were in place prior to the pandemic and which were designed for well understood, stable and predictable contexts were now less relevant. Senior management chose to manage things in a new, less comfortable and riskier way. A true adaptive management<sup>18</sup> approach was required. It was one that accommodated continuous adjustments based on the best available information gathered from the field, data analysis and a willingness to re-evaluate and adjust decisions as things became clearer. Such agility demands quick decisions, something not often associated with the ILO's cautious and highly consultative processes. To the surprise of many people interviewed, the ILO proved it was up to the challenge of working in this way – as one senior manager put it, “the ILO was uncharacteristically agile”. The extent to which ILO might retain this agility post-pandemic is an important consideration for the future.

Many decisions had to be made to ensure the Organization could continue its work – including office closures (HQ was closed on 16 March in advance of local government directives), information technology investments (a rapid upgrade was needed to enable internal operations and work with constituents and to enhance IT security), and HR matters (see 3.3.2). Maintaining clear communications was also a priority and the ILO's approach during the pandemic was highlighted as good practice in the UN Joint Inspection Unit's report on business continuity across the UN system: “an office-wide internal communications campaign intended to bring staff together virtually and in the new hybrid work environment (One ILO connect) was conducted, which engaged office-wide various stakeholders and helped bridge the gap between headquarters and the field”.<sup>19</sup>

18. “Adaptive management refers to an approach to managing under conditions of ongoing uncertainty which represents a paradigm shift from classic, linear approaches to planning, implementation and evaluation. This approach to using information is needed when it is not possible to gather sufficient information at the planning stage to be able to make detailed plans. It involves deliberately taking actions in order to learn and adapt as needed under conditions of ongoing uncertainty.” See: Better Evaluation, “[Adaptive Management](#)”, nd.

19. “UN Joint Inspection Unit, Business continuity management in United Nations system organizations” (JIU/REP/2021/6), 84.

At an operational level, once ILO management at HQ and the field had set in place this organizational framework, it was able to maintain its work despite the many continuing challenges. As one ILO manager put it, “we managed to muddle through”. Some developments in the ILO that occurred just prior to the pandemic also aided operational continuity, such as finalizing the field offices’ migration to the Oracle system used by HQ (previously two different systems had been in place, and this may have complicated operational planning and management during the pandemic). The very nature of ILO’s work also helped to some extent, as much of this work is knowledge-based it was less prone to disruption than, say, the work of development organizations involved in direct humanitarian relief work.<sup>20</sup>

The country case studies highlighted a range of experiences and views on the management responsiveness of the ILO at the country level.

- ▶ Over the period of the pandemic, the **CO for Argentina** had a change of Directors and its experienced programme officer retired. Nevertheless, it was one of the first countries to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. It published a series of technical notes on the effects of the pandemic on the labour market, platform work, domestic work and female health workers (this one in partnership with UNWOMEN and UNFPA), all in 2020. The CO provided inputs for the preparation of the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator’s document “Multidimensional Impact of the Pandemic caused by COVID-19 in Argentina”, has been in permanent contact with the constituents’ organizations to provide information on the documents, ILO and other UN agencies’ data and guidelines, and shared information on the measures that other countries in the region were taking to deal with the effects of the pandemic. There was close contact with the Programming Unit in the Regional Office, but the unprecedented demands slowed down some regional and HQ responses to the country’s needs.
- ▶ **Iraq** faced unique challenges, most of which were outside the ILO’s control. The Country Office’s establishment phase and the approval of its DWCP coincided with the onset of the pandemic, compounding its already challenging operating environment requiring security restrictions on staff movement (including the need for armed vehicles) and office accommodation issues. Despite these obstacles, the ILO established a US\$35 million programme portfolio in two years. Online platforms facilitated communication and collaboration with the Regional Office, HQ, and consultants based in Jordan and Lebanon, enhancing access to technical guidance on project proposals.
- ▶ **Mexico** experienced different disruptions with office relocation coinciding with crisis and turnover at the country director level (one leaving just as the pandemic hit and another five months later). Nevertheless, the DWCP in Mexico offered the conditions for the creation of a Tripartite Board, which met virtually in March 2020 to learn the actions of the tripartite actors in response to the pandemic, and to take further actions to protect workers, jobs, and income. ILO supported the development of a new project to reactivate the economy and employment post-pandemic with the emphasis on just transition. It produced OSH guides and protocols to the agriculture sector, rural workers and domestic workers. Knowledge produced by the CO on the effects of the pandemic on vulnerable groups created an early warning and supported the action being taken by the constituents.
- ▶ The **CO for South Africa** also has a DWT, supporting other countries in East and Southern Africa. The management processes established at this level reflected the model described for HQ – frequent meetings and communication focusing initially on staff safety and business continuity, and on maintaining dialogue with constituents (including equipping employers’ and workers’ organizations with technology to enable this, as well as communication with their members). The office said it worked closely with HQ, with knowledge products such as the ILO Monitor establishing the authority of the ILO with stakeholders.

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20. United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, ["Outline: The Impact of COVID-19 on Humanitarian Access"](#), 2021.

- ▶ In four countries in the **Western Balkans**, while constituents valued ILO's policy responses (for example, its rapid assessments of the impact of COVID-19 on labour markets, its policy advocacy, the help it gave to governments to act better and faster, OSH and working from home guidelines), the ILO's responsiveness to the crisis was seen to have been adversely affected by its relatively small presence at the country level compared with UNDP, UNICEF and other organizations, administrative inefficiencies (procedures were described as a "blast from the past"), and insufficient human resources to help all countries at the same time resulting in some National Coordinators receiving more timely assistance than others. Administrative procedures were widely reported to have held up country initiatives.
- ▶ In **Indonesia**, employers observed that ILO was very adaptable during the initial crisis phase, playing an important role in facilitating COVID-19 vaccination in workplaces and in emphasizing OSH to prevent sickness spreading through work contacts. However, they also noted that these actions reduced the attention being given to the original DWCP, which was still a priority to them. Workers' organizations noted that ILO invested in training on conducting online meetings and training, which was very useful to improve their activities during the pandemic and which built new capacity for unionists. In the palm oil sector, unions particularly appreciated ILO's work on strengthening bipartite (workers' and employers' organizations) social dialogue and agreements on specific issues, such as OSH and child labour. Nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners, who played an important role in COVID-19 response activities, reported rapid support from ILO in terms of technical advice for new or modified activities, but slow administrative and financial procedures.
- ▶ In **Viet Nam**, the CO experienced an unsettled period at senior management level from May 2021, when the Country Director moved to another position, until April 2022 when the current Country Director took up the post. This coincided with the peak of the pandemic in the country, but despite the challenges, the office was able to contribute to the COVID-19 response across its programme. The ILO provided rapid assistance to the government's General Statistics Office to apply the ILO's latest statistical tools enabling quarterly updates of the impact of the pandemic on the labour market. Staff reflected on the fact that the CO had maintained an evidence-based strategy rather than rushing into initiatives. The CO had also maintained its focus on staff wellbeing and did not seek additional COVID-19 projects to add to an already extensive portfolio, but rather adapted its existing programme. UN partner representatives observed that the ILO contributed effectively to the joint UN plan the COVID-19 response, as well as COVID-19 adjustment to the joint UNDP-ILO social protection strategy. Representatives of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour found the ILO's response prompt and relevant in supporting COVID-19 risk assessment tools and implementation.

Organizational leadership was an important element of this agile management response – the situation called for quick decisions to be made, often with significant information gaps. Some senior managers interviewed said that there were calls from some to slow things down in the hope that things would become clearer, which were resisted. One department director indicated that without this willingness to make hard decisions that went beyond trying to maintain “business as usual” the ILO would have “been stuck”.

The HLE's survey of staff provided additional insights on perceptions of the ILO's institutional readiness and response. On a ten-point scale, with 10 being “very well prepared” and 0 being “not at all prepared” to manage the uncertainty and unpredictable changes of the early stages of the pandemic, the average score was 5.62. While communication was ranked by many staff among the top three successes of the ILO's response, it also ranked highly among the three key shortcomings by many staff.



## GOVERNANCE DURING THE CRISIS

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ ILO governance systems were challenged in unprecedented ways, demanding speed, adaptability and new virtual processes while preserving social dialogue.
- ▶ In the early stages of the crisis, when the Organization needed quickly to set a direction for the global policy response, the usual governance processes were circumvented to some extent. The initial “four pillar” strategic framework was set by ILO management without explicit constituent endorsement although it did align closely with the Centenary Declaration and the 2020–21 P&B. In this sense, ILO management recontextualized the ILO’s existing endorsed policy direction rather than changed it.
- ▶ Despite some reservations about the loss of opportunities for human interaction and one-to-one discussions and debate due to virtualization of governance systems, constituents were satisfied that the ILO’s response was appropriate in the circumstances and that its actions showed that it remained strongly committed to social dialogue and consultation throughout the crisis.

COVID-19 also required agility and flexibility from the ILO’s governance structures which are unique within the UN system in their application of the principles of social dialogue through both the GB and the International Labour Conference (ILC). While the governance systems of large private sector companies are usually led by relatively small boards of 12–15 directors, the ILO’s are expansive – the GB has 56 titular members<sup>21</sup> and 66 deputy members,<sup>22</sup> the ILC has 748 voting members.<sup>23</sup> This may make the ILO’s governance arrangements seem unwieldy by comparison, but they embody the social dialogue and tripartite approach which it promotes.

COVID-19 challenged these governance systems in unprecedented ways, demanding speed, adaptability and new processes while preserving social dialogue. Travel and meeting restrictions meant that the 338th and 339th Sessions of the GB had to be cancelled and, as an interim measure, the GB ran a series of 17 virtual meetings which involved Officers of the GB and members of its “tripartite screening group”. Through these meetings, the screening group was briefed on the impact of the pandemic on ILO operations so that urgent and important decisions could be made, including the deferral of the June 2020 ILC.<sup>24</sup> Some decisions were made “by correspondence” including the decision to hold the 340th Session of the GB virtually – a first for the ILO. This virtual GB meeting required some groundwork, including the establishment of the legal basis for such a meeting and the adoption “special arrangements and rules of procedure” for its conduct. Similarly, the 109th Session of the ILC in June 2021 was conducted virtually for the first time.

Other UN agencies also had to adapt their governance systems during the pandemic, but the tripartite nature of the ILO made this challenge more complex. Despite this, the ILO adapted well compared with other UN agencies (for example, the 2021 report of the UN Joint Inspection Unit, cited above, highlighted the ILO’s use of virtual meetings in its governance as good practice<sup>25</sup>).

21 Governments, 14 Employers and 14 Workers.

22 Governments, 19 Employers and 19 Workers.

23 Each of the 187 Member States can have two government delegates, one employer delegate and one worker delegate. Each delegate has one vote.

24 GB.340/INS/18/6

25 UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2021/6), 85.

Constituents expressed various views on these governance adaptations but accepted that they were unavoidable. Some highlighted the important human contact dimension of social dialogue that was lost without physical meetings, such as informal one-to-one discussions and debate, and networking with others to exchange information and ideas freely and spontaneously. But they acknowledged that they worked well in the circumstances. A workers' organization spokesman on the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Social Security, shared his experience of participating virtually in the 2021 ILC delivered.<sup>26</sup>

In the early stages of the crisis, when the organization needed quickly to set a direction for the global policy response, the usual governance processes were circumvented to some extent. The development of the initial "four pillar" strategic framework (see 4.1) was, for example, led by the Office and not explicitly endorsed by constituents, though it did align very closely with the 2020–21 P&B and followed the principles set out in the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which was endorsed by the ILC just months before (June 2019). As a senior manager said, "this initial policy framework set the broad parameters for the ILO's response until the Global Call to Action" (see 4.1).

Representatives of constituents acknowledged that the usual engagement processes could not be followed in these early stages. As one said, "the Office engaged, but things happened very quickly; yes, decisions were a bit more top-down than usual, but the sheer volume of work and delayed GB guidance inhibited things to some extent." Another constituent representative, while commending the ILO's work with constituents in programme implementation, believed engagement should have done more to address the existential threat faced by representative bodies in retaining and servicing members during the crisis. In the **Western Balkans**, on the other hand, some employers' organizations reported



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**The challenges were considerable, and many colleagues had doubts, including myself, that this format would produce acceptable conclusions. However, it did, and we overcame the obstacles. We should not forget that all the delegations had to make significant efforts to make this happen, including working from the early hours in some regions and into the night in others.**

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26 ILO, News: International Labour Conference 2021: What are the lessons from the Social Security Committee? 28 June 2021.

increased interest and membership, building on analytical documents and publicity they received through collaboration with ILO. In the same region, some employers' organizations felt that ILO did not really assist them, because its limited country and subregional human resources were fully occupied in support to governments and employers.

ILO senior management stressed that maintaining social dialogue and continuing to engage with constituents remained the highest priority throughout the pandemic. Some cited the "extraordinary level of consultation with constituents" that led to the 2021 ILC's "Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient." Negotiating remotely for many months with constituents from 187 Member States involved a big investment of time and reaching agreement on the Call to Action was a major achievement. One senior manager in HQ said that the ILO received feedback that no other UN agency had given as much attention to consulting with government constituents and framing its response to meet their needs. In some cases, this involved more direct contact, for example, rather than consulting just with Geneva-based country representatives, remote consultations directly with Ministry of Labour officials became more common, along with hybrid meetings involving both Geneva-based and in-country representatives. This was said to have enhanced the two-way exchange of information and views and the relevance of ILO's responses.

New governance and management processes introduced during the pandemic that proved to be efficient and effective should be reviewed and agreement sought on which of these should be maintained in the post-pandemic world. The example was given that some less crucial GB decisions could continue to be made "by correspondence" if all parties agreed. This would allow face-to-face discussions at GB meetings to spend more time on more substantive issues.

## RESOURCING THE CRISIS RESPONSE

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ ILO quickly established procedures to enable Regular Budget and development cooperation funds to adapt to new circumstances while maintaining accountability. Despite these steps, lack of budget flexibility was sometimes reported as an obstacle to a rapid response.
- ▶ In terms of development cooperation funds, the ILO quickly reached out to its funding partners to brief them on the situations faced in the field and to discuss how projects might be adapted. While some projects had only limited scope to change, others were able to make significant adjustments.
- ▶ The ILO was also able to mobilize new voluntary contributions from development partners to respond to the emerging needs of constituents and to address the challenges of the pandemic.
- ▶ Human resource management played a vital role in ensuring business continuity and the ongoing delivery of the Organization's mandate. The ILO adapted quickly, establishing new systems, equipping staff to work remotely, and ensuring their workplace safety.
- ▶ The speed of the ILO's response in crisis situations in the field was raised as a concern. Delays in funding approvals and in recruitment of technical specialists to meet increased COVID-related demand presented difficulties in the field, only resolved in some cases by using staff assigned to development cooperation projects. ILO's inability to quickly mobilize human resources in response to crises was identified by staff and constituents as an obstacle. Some opportunities were lost due to this slow response.

## Financial management in response to the pandemic

### Overview of budget and expenditure in the 2020–21 biennium

The ILO's Regular Budget (RB) for 2020–21 was US\$790.6 million of which US\$496.6 million was earmarked for the delivery of policy outcomes.<sup>27</sup> Estimated extrabudgetary funding in the biennium, including voluntary contributions for development cooperation projects (XBDC) and unearmarked contributions to the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), was US\$500 million.

Actual RB expenditure in the biennium was 5 per cent under budget (US\$749.8). Combined XBDC and RBSA expenditure was 33 per cent over the estimate (US\$667.7 million). Expenditure was higher than estimated across all P&B policy outcomes except Outcome 6 on gender and non-discrimination. This expenditure included funds committed in the previous biennia. In the 2020–21 biennium, new approvals in the XBDC and RBSA categories reached US\$672.5 million. This was a 15 per cent decrease from the record level achieved in 2018–19 but was a strong result given the fiscal strain placed on donors during the pandemic.

### Flexibility and agility in adapting Regular Budget expenditure

The crisis required the ILO to make rapid adjustments to its planned expenditures. The ILO's operating environment was different, and constituents' needs, and priorities had suddenly changed. The Organization was quick to understand the need for budget flexibility to maintain relevance and introduced innovative and proactive measures to allow this. Established financial management systems were not so rigid as to prevent or delay an agile response. As one senior manager said: "The ILO budget is reasonably flexible if you know what to do."

In April 2020, just weeks after the pandemic was declared, the ILO issued a COVID-19 guidance note on the delivery of the Programme and Budget for 2020-21.<sup>28</sup> This aimed to ensure transparency and accountability in any adjustments made, especially within the Regular Budget. The note reaffirmed the continuing relevance of the P&B as an overarching framework for the ILO's response while enabling ILO managers and staff to deliver the P&B "with flexibility and agility, and through re-purposing of available resources":

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**Global deliverables set under the outputs of the Programme and Budget might have to be re-oriented or de-emphasized to the advantage of others that acquire greater relevance in view of evolving demands and circumstances. Country-specific strategies may also require revision. Adjustments in this respect will need to fit within the four interconnected pillars of the ILO framework for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as it affects the world of work. They should be reflected in the Outcome-Based Workplans (OBW) for the biennium as appropriate."**

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27 ILO, ILO Programme Implementation Report 2020–21. GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1) (2022).

28 <https://intranet.ilo.org/en-us/covid-19/Pages/delivery-of-P&B-2020-2021.aspx> accessed 26 May 2022. Accessible to ILO staff only

The guidance note set out the procedures on adjustments to different RB budget types, including Regular Budget “slippage”, Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC),<sup>29</sup> Regular Budget Supplementary Account, and Programme Support Income (PSI).<sup>30</sup> For example, in the case of RBSA, the note explained how COVID-19 adjustments by COs needed to be:

- ▶ **Discussed with the tripartite constituents** involved, through ACT/EMP and ACTRAV specialists in the case of the social partners, **and the relevant Outcome Coordination Team (OCT) Leads/technical specialists.**
- ▶ **Consistent with the original purpose** of the approved RBSA proposal and feasible within the approved budget.
- ▶ **Realistic** in terms of ambition, deliverables and timelines.

By mid-2020, regular budget staff cost savings of approximately US\$3.6 million had been identified which were re-directed as part of the COVID-19 response to support constituents, including the conduct of rapid assessments of the impact of the pandemic on labour markets (see **Box 2**) and OSH interventions. As set out in a report to the GB<sup>31</sup> in October 2020:

**Over 70 per cent (or some USD 13.4 million) of the resources allocated from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account were applied to address COVID-19 response strategies in 31 Member States, with a focus on employment generation, social dialogue and tripartism, sustainable enterprises, protection at work and social protection.**

Further, for the first allocation round of RBSA funds launched in April 2020, the COVID-19 response became the new priority. Their overall purpose in supporting countries to achieve P&B outcomes remained unchanged but would now “aim to support ILO constituents in developing effective responses to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work”<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, the guidance note re-oriented RBTC funds to the challenges of COVID-19. By the time the pandemic hit, 75 per cent of the overall RBTC provision for the biennium had already been disbursed to HQ departments and to the field. The note freed programme managers to consult with colleagues and OCT Leads to:

- ▶ **Refocus (within the same CPO or GP) or re-programme (towards other CPOs or GPs)** the already disbursed RBTC allocation to support urgent services constituents may request of the ILO in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Request the immediate release of the RBTC balance for that purpose.

29 That part of the Regular Budget that is specifically earmarked for providing Technical Cooperation assistance to ILO constituents.

30 Funds derived from income earned on programme support costs charged on development cooperation projects for indirect services provided by the ILO.

31 GB.340/INS/18/6, para. 69.

32 Page 5

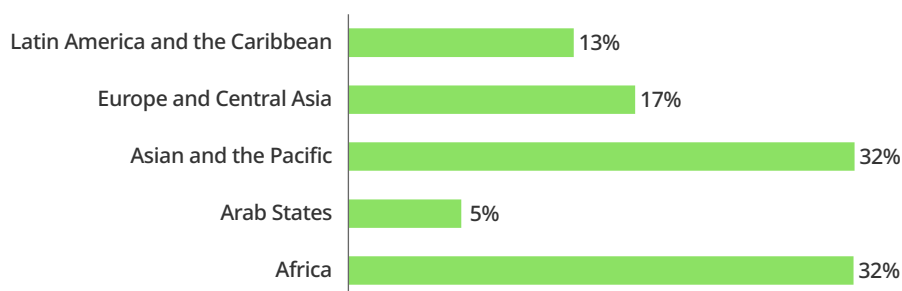
This HLE analysed the reflection of this new guidance on the CPO report database and found several inconsistencies (see Section 4.7). Following a thorough qualitative analysis, it found that 56 per cent of the CPOs reported some action in response to COVID-19. Next, it conducted an analysis of the actual expenditures associated with these actions and achievements to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and found a total of US\$180.7 million. It confirmed that XBDC and RBSA were the main sources of funding contributing with over US\$162 million to actions involving responses to the pandemic. Additionally, almost half of the total RBTC funds was allocated for this purpose, corresponding to over US\$18.7 million. Part of these RBTC funds were tagged as COVID-19 tracking – over US\$73,000. This tag refers mostly to supporting the Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of these expenditures in relation to ILO's overall expenditure for the biennium. Importantly, since these expenditures cover multiple actions that include, but not exclusively address COVID-19 related responses, the results presented next need to be read with a note of caution. They are a proxy of the ILO's expenditures on COVID-19 responses. According to an ILO senior manager, despite efforts at HQ to accurately locate responses to the COVID-19 crisis within specific outcomes or outputs "it is difficult to say how much money went for what. Theoretically, it would be good, but not practically possible."

**FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF COVID-19-RELATED EXPENDITURES AT THE POLICY ACTION DIMENSION RELATIVE TO ILO'S OVERALL EXPENDITURE, 2020-21**



Regionally, Africa and Asia and the Pacific reported most expenditures associated with policy actions including COVID-19 responses, over US\$58 million. This correlates with the higher number of projects in these regions (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2: REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF COVID-19-RELATED EXPENDITURES RELATIVE TO ILO'S OVERALL EXPENDITURE, 2020-21**



These guidelines and the processes they established were appropriate in the circumstances and allowed the budgetary flexibility needed for the ILO's actions to remain relevant while ensuring management oversight and accountability. However, the staff and constituent surveys suggested that adjusting budgets was not always straightforward with a significant percentage of respondents listing "financial agility and re-purposing of Regular Budget funds" as being among their "top three obstacles" to a timely response to COVID-19 (see Paras. 217 and 225). It should be noted that assessing compliance with these guidelines and processes was outside the scope of this evaluation.


### Flexibility and agility in adapting development cooperation project expenditure

As the pandemic took hold, it soon became clear that many existing project outputs could not be delivered as planned. At a global level, through its Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), the ILO reached out to its funding partners to brief them on its actions in response to COVID-19 and on the situations faced in the field and to discuss how projects might be adapted. PARDEV said that partners were generally open to these adaptations as they understood the new challenges and trusted in the ILO as a partner. Constituents also needed to be involved in this re-purposing of development cooperation projects to ensure their changing needs and priorities were met.

At the field level, PARDEV worked to strengthen the capacity of management and staff to engage with partners, including through webinars and by staggering work hours to better advise staff working in different time zones. Guidelines on developing contingency plans for project implementation and delivery were published on the ILO website<sup>33</sup> as well as “Tips for COVID-19 responsive projects – Is your project fit for purpose in the current COVID-19 context”.<sup>34</sup> These prompted project managers to assess whether projects could still adhere to established workplans and deliver planned outputs and results. Different advice was given for projects nearing completion (for example, consideration of early project closure and reaching agreement with donors on how remaining funds should be used) and projects with a longer time-horizon (for example, project suspension, adopting different intervention models to achieve similar results, or making bigger changes to address new needs).

These efforts allowed many projects to remain relevant and get results by switching to alternative delivery modes or by making other changes. A synthesis review of 41 project evaluations that were conducted during the pandemic (ILO, 2021: 7) found that projects were generally quick to adapt to their new circumstances, for example, by using remote delivery methods and by revising training content, especially regarding OSH. Often, they added new research elements that improved knowledge of the pandemic's effects and enabled further project refinements. Some were able to make more extensive changes to programme strategy and services, redefine beneficiary targets, extend their geographical coverage or develop completely new products and services. Some played a role in directly meeting infection control needs by producing personal protective equipment (PPE) as part of project implementation. One even diverted 20 per cent of its US\$3.5 million budget from high-level policy and governance activities to emergency humanitarian assistance, providing food, medicine and shelter to over 1,000 stranded migrant workers.<sup>35</sup> This positive finding on flexibility in project implementation was reinforced in an EVAL meta-analysis of ILO decent work results in the period 2021–22, highlighting some success of the ILO strategies put in place during the pandemic to maintain results:

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 **The ILO and its implementing partners showed flexibility and response capacity to allow, as far as possible, the continuity of activities despite delays and setbacks that limited the achievement of outputs and progress towards immediate objectives. Field offices were able to quickly adapt to online means of communication and in later stages, relying on the support of the ICT-ILO to move capacity development and training to online formats.**

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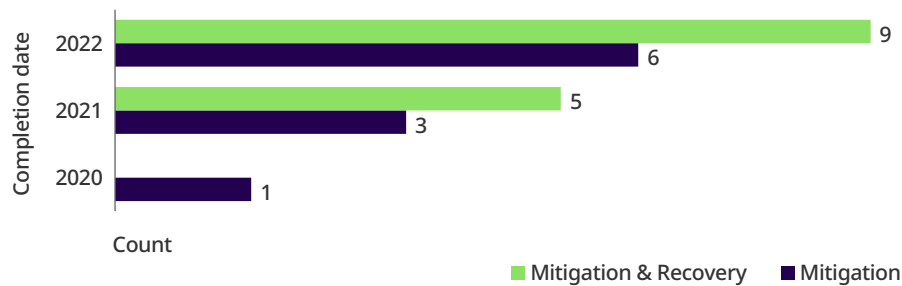
33 <https://intranet.ilo.org/en-us/covid-19/Pages/COVID-19-Guidance-Dc-project-implementation-and-delivery.aspx> accessed 26 May 2022. Accessible to ILO staff only.

34 <https://intranet.ilo.org/en-us/PARDEV/Documents/TIPS%20for%20COVID-19%20responsive%20projects.pdf#search=development%20cooperation%20covid> accessed 26 May 2022. Accessible to ILO staff only.

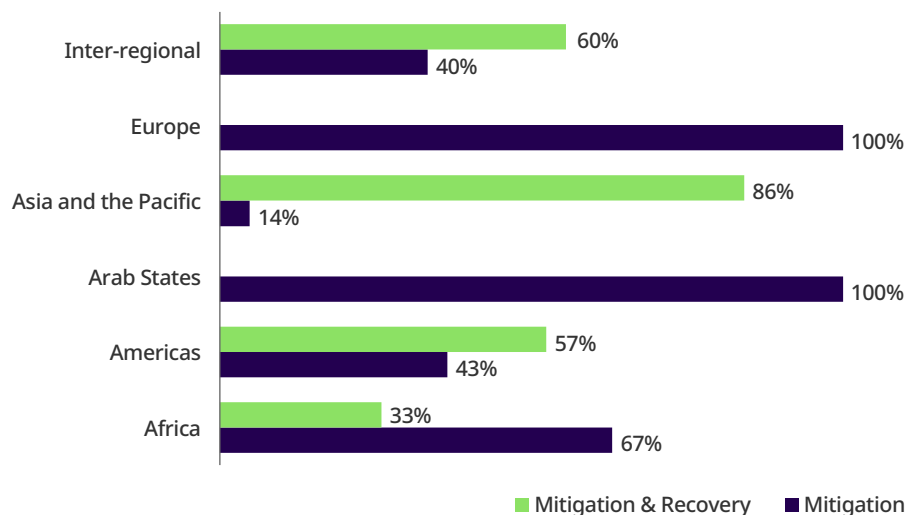
35 ILO, “Improved labour migration governance to protect migrant workers and combat irregular migration”, ETH/16/02/GBR

The third edition of the synthesis review with 46 project evaluations found that 52 per cent had implemented significant actions to respond to the impacts of the pandemic in the world of work. There is a trend in increasingly adapting and designing projects that, in addition to mitigating impacts, seek to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery, with emphasis on social protection and skills development (Figure 3). This is the case mostly in Asia and the Pacific and the Americas regions, as well as in inter-regional development projects (Figure 4). Fourteen project evaluations (30 per cent of the full sample) reported relevant recovery actions, with five of them being designed specifically with this purpose. They focus on sustainable enterprises in the informal economy, employment, the livelihoods of women and vulnerable populations, and the economic integration of refugees and migrant workers.

**FIGURE 3: TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE FOCUS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECTS IN MITIGATION AND RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (N=24)**



**FIGURE 4: FOCUS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECTS ON MITIGATION AND RECOVERY ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PER REGION (N=24)**





Such flexibility and adaptability in development cooperation netted results and often also improved internal coherence: interventions that could make significant changes that responded to the changed landscape of the pandemic “showed that the ILO could be agile in developing highly relevant activities and resources that meet stakeholder needs, and could overcome barriers to internal collaboration to unlock latent synergies and capacity to innovate.<sup>36</sup>” Examples of barriers that turned into opportunities include the expansion of inclusion and collaboration between stakeholders from multiple locations through virtual meetings as part of the response to lockdown restrictions, and the re-purposing of travel restrictions savings to implement new activities to respond to COVID-19, such as the production of studies on the impacts of the pandemic and increasing the number of participants in training activities. In larger, inter-regional development projects, emerging areas of work to respond to COVID-19 worked as a catalyst to mobilize resources, for instance, by sharing the project budget between ILO units to develop global products, such as the study on the green recovery from COVID-19 in West Africa.

### Mobilizing new funds for development cooperation in response to COVID

During the pandemic, the ILO was also able to mobilize new funds<sup>37</sup> designed to directly target the effects of the pandemic on the world of work. Again, the ILO, through PARDEV, was quick to provide guidance and practical tips on designing interventions that support constituents during the new reality of COVID-19. Early in the pandemic, PARDEV distributed a note summarizing the results of its engagement with key funding partners and providing information on their humanitarian and development cooperation funding in response to the pandemic. This note also guided field offices on what local follow-up action was required to both adjust existing projects and develop new funding proposals in response to COVID-19.

There were some negative comments about the capacity of the ILO to mobilize funds quickly enough in crisis situations. In the case study country of **Argentina**, a former senior manager spoke of the office’s efforts to position itself to support a national tourism recovery strategy. Argentina had received US\$30 million from the World Bank through the Tourism Ministry. The ILO had no prior contact with this Ministry but there was an opportunity to work with them to address informality in value chains, sustainable business practices, enterprise resilience and support ethnic minorities. US\$300,000 of RBSA funds were notionally allocated. Unfortunately, it took months to get the funding released and then more time was required for recruitment. In the end, the ILO “missed the boat” with the Tourism Ministry telling the ILO that it was too slow. As the senior manager put it: “ILO needs to invest more in its crisis response capability – immediate action gives us credibility.” Similar comments were made about the speed of the ILO response in **Serbia** (see Para. 257).

### The ILO’s people and the pandemic

Internal ILO workplace adaptations to the crisis are not a focus of this evaluation, but it is important to recognize that the measures taken in human resource management played a vital role in ensuring business continuity and the ongoing delivery of the Organization’s mandate. The wellbeing of staff was a clear priority, and this meant that many human resources policies and procedures had to be updated or tailored to the new circumstances – including those that covered OSH, mental health and wellbeing, working conditions (for example, leave, working time, overtime), balancing work with home care and home-schooling responsibilities, recruitment and onboarding, and later, vaccinations and return to office arrangements. In terms of the ILO’s OSH response, the HLE’s surveys found that both staff and constituents rated this very highly (see Paras. 216 and 224). Individual interviews were illustrative – as one informant said, “the medical service and the staff welfare service were at the service of the field offices.”

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36 ILO, 2021:43

37 New voluntary contributions were mobilized totalling US\$672.5 million.

Of course, the biggest human resources change was the introduction of mandatory teleworking. There was an existing teleworking policy in place prior to the pandemic which allowed teleworking to be approved for staff whose duties could be performed effectively outside the office, limited to a maximum of 50 per cent of working time in any month. In practice, teleworking had been relatively small in scale prior to COVID-19 and shifting most of a workforce of over 3,000 to telework was a challenge. It required the ILO to establish new staff support and information services, provide access to enabling technology and internet bandwidth, be flexible and understanding regarding the other pressures COVID placed on staff, ensure fairness in its implementation, and support managers and staff to get the skills they needed to work in this way (for example, how to manage staff or deliver services to constituents remotely).

Some departments said that, because of the existing policy, they were already accustomed to teleworking and were well prepared for its expansion under COVID-19, when eligibility was extended to all staff (including those on short-term and probationary contracts, interns and those engaged under development cooperation projects) and the restriction on the percentage of hours worked was removed. For many others telework was new and many had to adapt to it at a time when their workload had greatly increased.

However, because of the nature of the work they normally did, some found it was no longer possible to do their usual jobs at all – as one manager from HRD said, “some colleagues were over-worked, and some were under-worked”. HRD said that efforts were made to retrain these people so that they could do other jobs and allow the ILO to more flexibly mobilize its workforce. But this was not always straightforward. HRD said that “some managers resisted sharing under-utilized support staff” – presumably because these managers were concerned there might be longer term resource implications for their unit.

As of June 2022, the ILO was gradually returning to pre-COVID teleworking arrangements, but it is safe to say that, like many organizations around the world, teleworking is now an established part of the “new normal” and many more people will seek to continue to work in this way, at least to some extent. According to the ILO Programme Implementation Report 2020–21, teleworking and other innovations enabled the ILO “to sustain high quality services and support constituents, as well as the functioning of the governing organs”.<sup>39</sup> Staff and representatives of constituents concurred with this assessment.

The ILO needs to use the lessons learned during COVID-19 to maximize the benefits of teleworking while also reducing its negative effects. The evaluation team heard examples of both. For example, HQ specialists said that providing technical support remotely rather than through country missions, meant that this support was more continuous and less episodic but also less intensive – missions may have been infrequent but were more immersive. Remote delivery offers greater programme reach, including to beneficiaries in hard-to-reach locations and where the ILO does not have a local office. But it can also squeeze out more vulnerable, less technologically savvy participants, such as people working in the informal economy and the rural poor. On a human level, individuals working in teams benefit from face-to-face connection, especially new members who need to be immersed in team culture and develop natural mentoring relationships with people they trust. Working parents, especially women, can find the office to be a healthy escape from a teleworking environment that combines work with family responsibilities. At the same time, staff

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38 <https://intranet.ilo.org/apps/igds/en-us/Pages/DocumentDetails.aspx?igdsnumber=141>> accessed 26 May 2022. Accessible to ILO staff only.

39 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1) p. 78.

have become accustomed to teleworking – as one respondent in **Mexico** said: “a challenge will be to dismantle the teleworking structure to return to ‘normality’ - it will not be easy, workers have already got used to it.”

Some other human resource management concerns were also brought into focus during the pandemic that exposed a lack of institutional responsiveness to difficulties faced in the field. One regional director, using the example of the huge increase in demand for policy advice on social protection during the pandemic, was unable to get the human resources needed through internal channels. The DWT had only one social protection specialist who was already working at full capacity and HQ was similarly over-stretched. Ultimately, due to the flexibility of project donors, funding was found within existing development cooperation budgets to supplement internal resources by contracting additional international experts. But speed in mobilizing staff in a crisis is clearly an ILO weakness, reinforced in both the staff and constituent surveys which rated **“human resource flexibility, putting staff where needed” as the biggest obstacle to a rapid response during the crisis** (see Paras. 217 and 225). This was echoed in the EVAL meta-analysis of the decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations for 2021–22 which found that human resources were for the most part inadequate to deliver project outputs and objectives, highlighting how COVID constrained access to resources.

## SUPPORTING CONSTITUENTS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE DURING THE CRISIS

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ With employers' organizations, the ILO's capacity building work pivoted to address the needs of employers and business membership organizations (EBMOs) including through business continuity and support tools, local survey instruments, and online training. Reported P&B results exceeded target, but constituents said more was needed to strengthen EBMOs' value proposition to members.
- ▶ With workers' organizations, the ILO used its network of field specialists to share global good practices in trade union responses to the pandemic and support the continuation of social dialogue during the crisis, and organized online training and webinars at global, regional, subregional and national levels. P&B targets were not met, and a “digital divide” was identified as a contributing factor. The continuing need for face-to-face engagement with workers was highlighted and this suffered during the pandemic.
- ▶ The ILO's work in building the capacity of labour administration and social dialogue institutions required a major re-assessment of priorities and workplans as Member States sought guidance on policy and practices in response to the crisis.
- ▶ The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) played a central and much expanded role in building constituent capacity to meet the many new challenges brought by the pandemic.

## Overview

Learning lessons from the 2008 financial crisis,<sup>40</sup> ILO acted quickly to identify and address the challenges faced by constituents, using various channels including direct contacts with constituents, online meetings and workshops, feedback from field staff and DWCTs, secondary resources and surveys.

According to the *ILO Programme Implementation Report 2020–21*, the ILO initially “supported social partners to respond to the immediate health consequences of the pandemic in the workplaces, enabling them to remain functional and develop services, tools and resources for their members and the wider communities of employers and workers”.<sup>41</sup> This was followed by policy research and advocacy related to identified needs, such as business continuity and job preservation measures, skills development, income support and social protection responses. SMEs, workers and enterprises in the informal economy, and other vulnerable groups were a focus. Support for ministries of labour to develop their crisis response policies and programmes included knowledge products and policy guides, technical advice and support for labour inspectorates.

Total expenditure in P&B Outcome 1 (Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue) during 2020–21 was reported at US\$147.4 million, 68 per cent from the ILO regular budget, 29 per cent from extrabudgetary development cooperation contributions and 3 per cent from the RBSA. The evaluation’s financial analysis found that the ILO’s reported resources committed to the COVID-19 response either through repurposed or new projects supporting Outcome 1 reached US\$14.8 million. Significant differences were noted between regions, with Asia and the Pacific having 89 per cent (US\$13.2 million) of the repurposed or new COVID-19 related Outcome 1 projects.

Altogether, the ILO reported 199 results achieved under Outcome 1 during the biennium 2020–21, exceeding the target (179) by 11 per cent, although reported results against target differed between the constituent groups (see Paras. **170**, **175** and **180**).

In terms of supporting constituents to maintain services to members during the pandemic, the HLE’s survey of constituents rated the ILO’s work quite highly – see Para. **221** – though these results may have been skewed by a low and unequal response rate from different constituent groups.

## Building institutional capacity of constituents

Employers’ organizations described the challenges that they had faced at an institutional level during COVID-19 – including maintaining membership, communicating with and delivering services to members, and engaging in advocacy. When the crisis hit, ILO outcome-based work plans for building the capacity of EBMOs were revised to better reflect changing needs and priorities, but implementation was delayed in many countries due to office closures, an initial lack of teleworking capability and internet connectivity issues.

The ACT/EMP explained that its capacity-building work pivoted to address EBMOs’ needs to survive and provide value to their members. A more centralized approach was used which focused on producing global COVID-19 products customizable at the country level including policy advocacy support, business continuity and support tools, local survey instruments (for example, 420 surveys were conducted in 50 Member States), and online training (for example, EBMOs in 27 Member States were reported to have scaled up virtual training). Social dialogue was supported but ACT/EMP aimed to address those policy issues that “kept the employers’ organizations awake at night”. ITCILO was also subcontracted to deliver online training. Examples of ILO initiatives supporting the institutional capacity of employers included:

40 See for example, the Evaluation Office’s review of ILO’s past response to economic and financial crises: [ILO’s response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers and enterprises](#), 2020.

41 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1), p. 28.

- ▶ ACT/EMP carried out a global survey on the impact of the pandemic on EBMOs and their operations.<sup>42</sup> This provided a basis for reviewing future interventions in light of the likely mid- and long-term implications of the pandemic and enterprise recovery. The focus remained on new membership retention and service provision strategies, as well as on policy advocacy on business recovery and resilience.
- ▶ ACT/EMP developed practical tools to support EBMOs in the areas of OSH, working from home, safe return to work, other workplace issues and business continuity planning. Initially, these were developed at a global level and then customized to meet local circumstances.
- ▶ Templates were developed that enabled EBMOs to survey local enterprise recovery needs and assess training needs resulting from COVID-19.
- ▶ Webinars were held on key policy themes to enable information and knowledge-sharing between EBMOs.
- ▶ Guides were published for employers on COVID-19 prevention and safe return to work, and on a six-step COVID-19 business continuity plan.
- ▶ ACT/EMP also developed generic tools that colleagues in the field would take to the employers and adapt to the relevant legal national framework and translate.
- ▶ Some interactive tools were also created in which field colleagues could add local content and quotes.<sup>43</sup>

From the case study countries, an employers' organization representative in the **Western Balkans** said that the ILO was quick to provide them with "important documents that shed light on government and employers' organization responses to COVID-19 in regions of the world" and that this helped them prepare guides for members on such issues as OSH, telework, online payments, and the situation of different sectors. "We gave employers instructions on how to address the concerns based on the examples from the EU countries that ILO shared with us." In **Indonesia**, the ILO worked with the Indonesian Retail Merchants Association to train business owners and laid-off workers in digital skills to meet changed market needs. In **Viet Nam**, practical support was provided to ease communication challenges between the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its members via ICT equipment and Zoom accounts.

The Programme Implementation Report on Output 1.1 of the P&B ("Increased institutional capacity of EBMOs") showed results at a country level that were more than 50 per cent above target (61 versus 40 against two output indicators) but this may not be a reliable indication of the effectiveness of the ILO's work in building constituent capacity during the crisis. Employers' representatives acknowledged this P&B result but suggested that more could have been done to strengthen their value proposition to members during the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, including through innovative membership retention strategies and by improving policy advocacy capacity. This was echoed in the annual progress report of the Outcome-based Workplan (OBW) (ILO, 2020: 10)<sup>44</sup> which concluded that there was much more to do in supporting EBMOs<sup>45</sup> capacity and improving their resilience in crises. Two ILO reports, including one prepared jointly with the International Organization of Employers (IOE), analysed the effect of the pandemic on EBMOs and on their support to businesses. These may help shape future ILO support for these organizations, such as building institutional capacity in such focus areas as the future of work, the use of digital transformation tools, the organization of remote work, crisis management and the development and delivery of innovative member services.

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42 ILO. [Report of the Director-General. Sixth Supplementary Report: The response of the International Labour Office to the COVID-19 pandemic](#). GB.340/INS/18/6 (2020).

43 GB.340/INS/18/6

44 This report summarizes the conclusions of the 3rd OBW review of the 2020–21 biennium, a stocktaking meeting organized by PROGRAM with Outcome Coordination Team leads and field directors, and the semi-annual progress report by outcome.

45 ILO and IOE, [A global survey of employer and business membership organizations: Inside impacts and responses to COVID-19, 2020; and ILO, Leading business in times of Covid crisis. Analysis of the activities of employer and business membership organizations in the COVID-19 pandemic and what comes next](#), 2021.

Workers' organizations also faced huge challenges. The ability of trade unions to communicate with members was severely disrupted. As one representative said, "We never envisaged a need to move to online contact – the developing world was not ready for this. Everything had been based on physical meetings and it became difficult to contact them." A senior ILO manager in South America said, "constituents were paralysed and not digitally equipped." Disruption was also worsened as union leaders themselves fell ill with COVID-19. Workers' representatives said that it took over three months to re-establish links and this had "a severe impact on our ability to represent workers and to influence what the ILO was producing." Planned capacity development activities were adjusted, and the focus shifted to supporting workers to stay safe (for example, by developing short videos that trade unions could distribute).

The ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) used its extensive network of field specialists to gather information from the field and to share global good practice responses to the pandemic by employers' organizations. It connected with workers' organizations across the globe to collect and disseminate national trade union responses to the pandemic, including with regard to social dialogue processes, government measures and violation of workers' rights –focusing on the most vulnerable (for example, migrant workers, front-line health workers and informal economy workers). Building social dialogue capacity was crucial and ACTRAV indicated that they reinforced the message that, in engaging with the other social partners, "whatever was done should be done via social dialogue". In the process, workers' representatives were urged not to surrender gains made through collective bargaining as these were designed to protect workers at the highest level. DIALOGUE issued a *Policy Brief*<sup>46</sup> on October 2020 analysing the use of "peak-level social dialogue" during the "initial phase" (15 March–10 June 2020) of the pandemic. The brief presented observations on policy issues and possible avenues for constituents. It informed DIALOGUE's work going forward, including on the need to advocate for social dialogue measures that specifically target workers and business units in the informal or undeclared economy, migrant workers, freelancers and self-employed.

Other examples of ILO initiatives supporting institutional capacity of workers' organizations include:

- ▶ A video staging site (established by June 2020) through which guidance could be given to trade unions on social dialogue and on ways to assist the most affected workers including women, youth and people with disability.
- ▶ Enhanced ILO support to unions to enable them to influence policies and revitalize social dialogue (for example, by promoting trade union alliances within each country, fostering bipartite dialogue with EBMOs and increasing the capacity to participate in national and UN planning processes to implement the 2030 Agenda (supported by a training package on the role of trade unions in multilateralism<sup>47</sup>).
- ▶ For the first time, the biennial ITCILO Academy on Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations took place in 2020 as an e-Academy and a new module for the Industrial Relations Global Toolkit (IR Toolkit) on strengthening industrial relations in times of crisis was used in online training. This online modality allowed for a larger number of participants to attend, and to have a higher proportion of women involved. In India, it led to the development of guidelines to establish COVID-19 workplace task forces to better respond jointly to the challenges of the pandemic; in Nepal, the collective bargaining module stood out.<sup>48</sup>

46 ILO, [Peak-level social dialogue as a governance tool during the COVID-19 pandemic: Global and regional trends and policy issues](#), Policy Brief, 2020.

47 ILO, [United Nations sustainable development cooperation and decent work: A trade union reference manual](#), 2020.

48 ILO, *Outcome-based funding support to ILO projects in the field of employment and skills, social dialogue and labour relations, protection for all at work, gender equality and equal opportunities, and just transition to the green economy for the period 2020–210. Final cluster evaluation* (Evaluation Office, 2021) ([https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationreports/WCMS\\_818207/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationreports/WCMS_818207/lang--en/index.htm), accessed 5 October 2022).

- ▶ Dissemination of relevant knowledge products through social media, e-training sessions and webinars, highlighting innovative practices of social dialogue in response to the crisis, for example, research and policy briefs developed by DIALOGUE were used in seminars, workshops, and during calls with constituents on mobilizing a response through social dialogue.<sup>49</sup>
- ▶ With ILO support, workers' organizations in 28 Member States expanded outreach to previously unorganized workers, set up new organizations or developed new services to support workers in tackling COVID-19-related challenges, including through new digital tools and increased online media presence.<sup>50</sup>
- ▶ ACTRAV organized over 40 webinars for workers' organizations operating at global, regional, subregional and national levels.

ILO capacity building support was positively regarded by workers' organizations in the case study countries. In **Montenegro**, a Trade Union representative described how ILO through ACTRAV supported its research of the perception of workers of COVID impacts (for example, on the role of trade unions, collective bargaining, work status, stability of contracts). This fed into its communication strategy: "...our visual identity was improved as we received support from ILO PR and marketing experts... we improved our presence on social networks and the public was in touch with us." In Viet Nam, assistance included ICT and Zoom accounts being provide to the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour to support its engagement with members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike the situation with employers, the Programme Implementation Report on Output 1.2 of the P&B ("Increased institutional capacity of workers' organizations") showed that targets were not met (54 versus 71 against two output indicators). The OBW report noted a "digital divide" which hampered the work of many trade unions during the pandemic, "both with their own members, and with the ILO."<sup>51</sup> Workers' representatives recognized this weakness in capacity but were also cautious about going too far down the path of remote serving of workers. As one representative said:

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**▶ Many poor, precarious workers need to be contacted in the traditional way. Much of SECTOR's work did not go down the digital path as too many workers are not equipped for it. Traditional communication for workers – such as handing out leaflets outside a factory – will continue and needs ILO's support.**

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Another said, "We need to remember that collective, face-to-face contact remains important and builds trust. Also, some people [in countries where Freedom of Association is not guaranteed] will have concerns about being overheard when using digital communication." The OBW report highlighted how digitalization of products and services expanded the reach of the ILO's capacity development. But it noted also that many constituents wanted a "blended strategy" that included face-to-face interactions.

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49 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

50 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

51 ILO, 2020:11

Outcome 1 of the P&B also covers the ILO's work in building the capacity of labour administration and social dialogue institutions and in enhancing collective bargaining and workplace cooperation within Member States. The pandemic required a major re-assessment of priorities and workplans as Member States sought information on global policy and practices in response to the crisis, support for building the capabilities of labour administration staff, policies and protocols to monitor compliance with safe return to work legislation, and policy and guidance on working hours and fundamental principles and rights at work.

From the case studies, in **Serbia** a Ministry of Labour representative said that “the most important ILO contribution in the COVID period was the analysis of the proposed changes to the Law on Seasonal Workers. This is one of the most important laws in every country that concerns almost all citizens”. In **South Africa**, the ILO lobbied very hard for the Ministry of Labour and employer and workers' organizations to be part of the presidential coordinating committees. It also helped with the issue of ensuring that the workers themselves and employers, particularly the workers, would advocate what kind of policies were needed. In **Iraq**, through an EU-funded COVID-19 response project, ILO supported the development of a national OSH policy and programme in consultation with social partners and gave technical support to government officials, particularly labour inspectors and staff of the National Center for Occupational Health and Safety. In **Montenegro**, the ILO supported the Ministry of Labour in updating its teleworking policies.

The ILO organized virtual meetings and webinars with labour administration institutions, trained labour inspectors remotely, supported virtual labour inspection assessments, and developed a new online platform for capacity building, engaging with labour inspectorates and monitoring strategic compliance plans<sup>52</sup>. Much of ILO's planned work in support of social dialogue was shifted to online or remote delivery, including the academy on social dialogue and industrial relations, online advice to constituents, and desk-based review of legislation and policies. Face-to-face facilitation of tripartite negotiations were postponed and progress towards some outcomes stalled in some locations. Capacity building to support Member States to address the needs of key sectors was an important focus including for frontline sectors such as health and emergency services as well as hard-hit sectors like tourism and civil aviation.

The Programme Implementation Report 2020–21 showed that performance in the relevant P&B outputs (1.3 and 1.4) exceeded targets (39 versus 33 in 1.3,<sup>53</sup> improving the capacity of labour administrations; and 45 versus 35 in 1.4, strengthened social dialogue). However, a more meaningful performance story can be found in the narrative section of this report which mentioned that many of these results referenced the “use of social dialogue to develop effective country responses to COVID-19” and ILO's contribution to “strengthening labour dispute resolution systems as a mechanism to address the consequences of the pandemic, particularly in Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia.”<sup>54</sup>

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52 ILO, 2020:7

53 Indicator 1.3.2, Member States with strategic compliance plans, was under target (9 versus 13). This was counter-balanced by being over target in 1.3.1, Member States with improved institutional frameworks (30 versus 20).

54 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1), p. 31.



The ITCILO played a central and much expanded role in building constituent capacity to meet the many new challenges faced during the pandemic. It has run programmes for governments, and employers' and workers' organizations for almost 60 years. During the pandemic, it faced a surge in demand for its services whilst concurrently shifting further towards remote delivery. According to the March 2022 Programme Implementation Report to the GB,<sup>55</sup>

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**▶▶ The pace of transformation at the Turin Centre accelerated in 2020–21. Driven by a surge in online training, the number of participants in the Centre's activities more than doubled. The Workers and Employers Activities Programme tripled its distance learning outreach, compensating for the temporary suspension of face-to-face training activities.**

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The quality of this training was reported to have been maintained – a 2021 evaluation of the impact of distance learning activities (commissioned by ITCILO) and covering more than 9,000 participants reported that similar or higher level of knowledge acquisition and application rates were achieved compared with previous assessments (see **Box 1**).

In some case study countries, the merits of virtual delivery of constituent support were questioned. In **Iraq**, for example, inadequate internet coverage and ministry and social partners' staff not being competent in the use of online platforms were reported as barriers – both in connection and in building trust. In **Mexico**, a constituent saw virtual delivery as being “a good alternative solution, but nothing replaces face-to-face, especially in meetings where there are more than two institutions.” But other case study countries saw the ILO's increased use of technology in engaging with constituents as both effective and overdue. As a senior manager in **South Africa** put it:

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**▶▶ COVID forced us to use the tools we had. It was an opportunity to push us further in terms of our methods and to engage with our social partners, government and the UN in a much more aggressive way. Colleagues in other parts of Africa had challenges, but here in the southern part, it was an opportunity.**

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55 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

## ► Box 1: Constituent capacity building during the pandemic: ITCILO in Turin

### Background

ITCILO is the capacity development arm of the ILO. While its primary targets are ILO constituents, it also provides services for the ILO's work in support of constituents, to other UN agencies, and for ILO partners involved in promoting Decent Work and social justice. Around 60 per cent of its services are in the form of training for individual learners. The other 40 per cent relate to institutional or system-level capacity development in such areas as strategy, training material development, event facilitation, project management, and data services for knowledge management. The progressive digitization of ITCILO services commenced well before the pandemic began and it was therefore well placed to respond to the unexpected challenge of COVID-19 – as one informant put it, “we were prepared for 2020, we just didn't know what we were prepared for.”

### Growth in the number of individual constituents trained

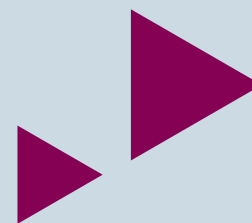
COVID-19 greatly accelerated ITCILO's planned diversification from face-to-face training towards distance learning. Almost 28,769 constituents were trained in the 2020-21 biennium, a figure that was 300 per cent above target. Compared with the previous biennium, the number of workers trained increased by 82 per cent to 12,381; employers by 81 per cent to 7,224; and staff from Ministries of Labour by 105 per cent to 9,164.<sup>56</sup>

Online training was delivered in both self-guided or tutor-based modes (or via a blend). The self-guided training was free, accessible 24 hours a day and in different languages. The most popular courses related to OSH, International Labour Standards, the MNE Declaration and supporting SMEs during COVID-19.

### Increase in institutional capacity development support for constituents

Constituents and related entities, including EBMOs, trade union training bodies, OSH training institutes, and labour administration training centres, commissioned ITCILO to develop online courses and learning platforms in the context of COVID-19 (for example, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines new eCampus platform which has enabled it to offer capacity development services to its members and more broadly in the Pacific<sup>57</sup>).

Virtual event facilitation services also became an important service for the ILO and constituents – webinars, virtual conferencing, virtual fairs and exhibitions,<sup>58</sup> and dialogue events. HLE informants pointed to the contributions made by ITCILO in supporting the digitization of ILO tools and programmes that support constituents and their members – for example, SCORE, WED, and SIYB in the Enterprises Department, use of an ITC platform for sectoral skills anticipation work, capacity building in digitalization for national training systems (for example, in Indonesia) and educators (for example, in Senegal), and the conduct of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) covering topics such as Business and Decent Work,<sup>59</sup> Quality Apprenticeships and Recognition of Prior Learning,<sup>61</sup>



56 Data provided by ITCILO sourced from e-campus, MAP, and SOLICOMM. Figures include both face-to-face and distance learning.

57 Employers Confederation of the Philippines, “[Welcome to ECOP eCamp](#)”.

58 For example, the ILO's Enterprises Department ran a virtual fair on innovations in sustainable enterprises.

59 ITCIL, “[Massive Online Open Course – business and Decent Work: How enterprises contribute to achieve decent work for all \(SDG 8\)](#)”, 2021.

60 ILO, “[MOOC on quality apprenticeships. ILO webinar on Innovations and Strategies for Quality Apprenticeships](#)”, 2020.

61 ILO, Webinar: “[Technological innovations in Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)”, 2022.

## ► Box 1: Constituent capacity building during the pandemic: ITCILO in Turin (cont'd.)

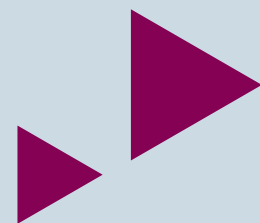
### Perspectives on the shift to distance learning during COVID-19

Informants were almost universally appreciative of the role played by ITCILO during the pandemic. Not only did it contribute to ILO and constituents' business continuity in the context of the initial crisis and the constraints it imposed on service delivery, but it has accelerated the adoption of new approaches, long anticipated but slow to be realized, that could be used to address longstanding weaknesses in ILO's operations: scale and reach. As one senior policy manager put it: "In the past, it might have cost US\$200,000 to train 20 people in a residential course but the business model is now changed, and we could conceivably aim to train a million people in a year."

Questions about the relative quality and impact of this training were raised, but ITCILO reported that participant satisfaction levels in 2020–21 (which were mainly delivered remotely) remained about the same as in 2018–19 when face-to-face delivery dominated.<sup>62</sup> An evaluation commissioned by ITCILO in 2021 reported that 94.3 per cent of online learners stated that they applied new knowledge in their work.<sup>63</sup>

Constituents were impressed with ITCILO's digitalization of its capacity development work, but had some "mixed feelings", especially about access for vulnerable groups without digital skills and tools. ITCILO is alert to the issue of digital inclusion and has even published a guidance paper on the subject that specifically looks at new "exclusion dynamics" brought by COVID-19 for certain groups.<sup>64</sup>

Analysing how these dynamics might have affected access to capacity development for constituents and their members was beyond the scope of the HLE, but to fully harness the potential of digitization, ITCILO needs to work closely with ACTRAV and ACT/EMP to better understand access barriers and to work on inclusion strategies at a global and local level. At the same time, the limits of digital approaches need also be acknowledged as do the benefits of face-to-face human interaction.



62 Average score was 4.46 in 2020–21, down from 4.49 in 2018–19, on a five-point scale where 5 denoted high satisfaction.

63 Olaf Zawacki-Richter and Kyungmee Lee. [Evaluation of the online training activities of ILO's International Training Centre \(Turin Italy\). Final evaluation](#), 2021. Future evaluations will separately assess online learning and face-to-face training impact to allow for cross-comparisons.

64 ITCILO. [Digital inclusion in adult learning – practices and recommendations](#), 2021.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE UN RESPONSE

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The ILO's technical expertise, normative role and ability to produce authoritative labour market data during the pandemic enhanced its profile and led to greater and higher level engagement within the UN system.
- ▶ While this was a positive outcome, it also may suggest a weakness in the ILO's marketing of its expertise and capacity in normal circumstances.
- ▶ This enhanced profile does not seem to have led to a corresponding increase in access to UN COVID response funds, especially at the country level. Some respondents noted that, for a variety of reasons, ILO often struggles at country level to get into United Nations Country Team (UNCT) proposals and approaches.
- ▶ The ILO's elevated profile has led to many new partnerships and commitments which, if fully implemented, will take the Organization way beyond its previous regular programmes in terms of scope and scale. This raises questions about its current resourcing and capacity to deliver especially at the country level.

Cooperation with the multilateral system was a key element of the Centenary Declaration. A resolution of the UN General Assembly in September 2019 endorsing the Declaration<sup>65</sup> reinforced its importance and noted its "multidimensional focus that incorporates Governments, the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, employers' and workers' organizations", among others. The pandemic provided an early "real world" test of the readiness and capacity of ILO to bring the collaborative principles of its Declaration into practice in implementing a policy response.

From the early days of the pandemic, ILO proved itself to have the capacity to respond rapidly to many of the challenges posed. Two factors seen to underpin this readiness were the normative role of ILO regarding labour and employment, and its capacity to produce authoritative labour market data based on its extensive experience, expertise and networks in this area. **No other international body could match this combination**, which gave ILO a unique level of relevance to the situation and informed the UN system's pandemic responses at international and national level.

Under "normal" circumstances, several ILO entities play a role in shaping its relationships with the UN system and the broader international development landscape. The boundaries of responsibilities between them appear flexible, with some potential for overlap or competition. Broadly, DDG Policy assesses how ILO can best position itself among multilateral bodies, including international financial institutions (IFIs) and other UN agencies. ILO's Multilateral Cooperation Department provides partnership management and is the custodian of multilateral linkages. It covers who to work with and how and has a key role in partnership definition and coherence. When new partnerships trigger funding implications, PARDEV becomes involved. At country level, ILO is expected to participate in the development of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks under the oversight of the UN Resident Coordinator, within the evolving approach of the UN Reform Programme.

Although the formal allocation of responsibilities within ILO for interaction with UN agencies and other multilaterals did not change because of COVID, the pandemic gave rise to an **elevated number of high-level policy initiatives**, particularly within the UN community, as a result of which the engagement of DDG Policy with specialized agencies in New York, Washington and Geneva was heightened.

65 UN, Resolution A/73/L.117

It was widely reported by stakeholders internal and external to the ILO that, during its regular operations, the Organization is stretched thinly across many areas and that this challenges the coherence and effectiveness of its activities. Its perceived role and profile within the UN system is therefore lower than that of some agencies with more resources and greater field presence (but higher than that of many other smaller agencies). However, in response to the pandemic, **ILO brought together its technical expertise, normative role and implementation capacity rapidly and largely coherently**, promoting an enhanced profile in such areas as jobs and social protection and **leading to greater and higher level engagement within the UN system**, which was reflected from global policy levels to country responses and later recovery planning.

One of the major regular mechanisms providing overall management of the complex range of commitments and activities of ILO is its **Senior Policy Management Team**. For specific circumstances, this can be strengthened by more frequent meetings or by extending team membership to bring in additional expertise. During the pandemic, this mechanism was an important foundation of ILO's readiness and capacity to act to meet emerging challenges and requirements.

Below this level, cross-departmental issues are often addressed through a **Task Team** approach. During the pandemic, the many challenges arising were addressed through multiple Task Teams; notably that steering the "Nowcasting" approach to labour market statistics and the Global Accelerator Task Team, which helped operationalize **ILO's contribution to this initiative of the UN Secretary General's Common Agenda** – enabling the world to move from response towards recovery, within an over-arching Just Transition approach.

Building on statistical analysis and the success of the [COVID Monitor](#), ILO demonstrated its readiness and capacity to talk with authority at high-level discussions. Stakeholders among UN and other multilateral agencies confirmed that the profile of ILO among international development organizations was greatly raised. Although this trend is widely seen as a positive development, some respondents also noted that it points to a **weakness of ILO in marketing its expertise and capacity in normal circumstances**. Moving forward, it presents a challenge for ILO to maintain its heightened standing and influence (particularly among multilaterals), which will be essential to effectively promote SDG 8.

At a country level, the ILO's profile within the UN system was also enhanced through its COVID-19 response work, though this often **did not lead to a corresponding increase in accessing UN funds**. For example, in the ILO's East and Central Europe subregion, where most ILO country programmes are relatively small, the rapid and effective response of ILO (for example, through labour market change studies funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and OSH support to labour inspectorates) raised its profile with governments and within the UN system. However, despite this, its participation in UNCT programming often proved unsatisfactory, requiring substantial staff inputs for relatively small amounts of finance. Based on its early experience the subregional office took a decision not to participate in further UNCT proposals, which would produce funding for ILO of less than US\$100,000. This was reinforced by the fact that only about 5 per cent of this office's voluntary funds come through UN sources.

Whilst the outputs of the ILO's Statistics Department are recognized as a prime example of ILO's capacity and readiness to respond to the pandemic, other parts of the Organization were reported to have taken more time to deliver. Some stakeholders noted that, during the early stages of the pandemic, many ILO units proposed initiatives for UN-wide approaches, but with little coherence. The New York Office tried to coordinate these. ILO then set up a cross-departmental working group, which promoted synergies and creative thinking and raised the capacity to respond. New, more flexible, ways of working emerged, particularly using online options for meetings and discussions.

The effects of COVID-19 meant that ILO had to work at many levels and across many policy areas as it interacted with other agencies in the UN system. Formally, the distribution of roles and responsibilities worked as usual during the pandemic. Informally, some respondents noted “mission creep” related to the dynamism and complexity of the institutional landscape. This was observed to be motivated both by enthusiasm to address challenges at country level and by the desire to get more funds for activities.

In this context, the pandemic raised questions as to **whether any UN agency understands how best to engage with other partners in the system**, as well as on the extent to which UN stakeholders understand and accept the limitations of their own agencies. Some respondents noted that ILO often struggles at country level to get into UNCT proposals and approaches. Partly, they attributed this to personal variations among resident coordinators and country teams. But it was also suggested that ILO must **learn how to put itself into such situations more effectively**. ILO **must be realistic about the scope** of its role at country level, carefully considering what it can deliver with available human and financial resources.


In this area, the pandemic highlighted an emerging pattern. In countries where ILO's programme of services is strong, UNCT members already know about ILO's tripartite approach with its constituents and can adapt to include this more broadly in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). In **countries with smaller ILO programmes, UNCTs face challenges** to incorporate the tripartite approach, which some agencies fear may lead to potential modification of proposed approaches and resultant funding and implementation delays.

In the evaluation's country case studies, particularly in non-resident countries, it was widely reported that ILO does not have the resources in place either at country or supporting office (regional office and subregional office) level to effectively scale up its collaboration within COVID recovery plans or UNSDCFs. In this respect, the Organization's **readiness (and willingness)** to participate in country-level frameworks and plans was often seen to be **ahead of its capacity to deliver**.

Reflecting this resource constraint, during the pandemic the ban on mission travel proved a challenge to many ILO activities. Given that ILO COs are often small, while in other countries there is no resident office presence at all, country-level planning and implementation is normally strongly supported by frequent missions by Decent Work specialists from regional, subregional and HQ offices. The online support, which replaced these missions for some time was valuable but not as effective as in-person expert missions to address complex specialist issues in planning or implementation. In South-East Asia, for example, it proved especially difficult to support activities in countries where ILO is not resident but other agencies are. Significant programmes ran into challenges because of the impossibility of support missions. For example, Cambodia has 70 programme and project staff but no CO, while Nepal has a much smaller programme, but with two resident international staff.

**Approaches to ILO country-level staffing** have been under discussion for some years, but the requirements for readiness and capacity to respond to a major pandemic have raised them again; **particularly in the context of UN reform, which places a premium on inter-agency collaboration and joint programming.** Several reviews and evaluations conducted during the pandemic have reinforced the major challenges ILO faces in terms of field capacity. During the pandemic period, projects under implementation faced a number of efficiency challenges. Since these projects were mostly designed and operational before COVID effects entered, it is likely that the challenges pre-existed but were exacerbated by the pandemic. An Evaluation Office Review<sup>66</sup> of projects evaluated during 2020 and 2021 reported that:<sup>67</sup> “Just over one quarter of the projects (26 per cent) had sufficient human and financial resources available to deliver project outputs, with project funds delivered in a timely manner, revealing another area of weakness”. These limitations were also noted in the independent MOPAN Assessment<sup>68</sup> and in 2020–21 Programme Implementation report to the GB:<sup>69</sup>

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 **In some cases, the ILO struggled to provide coordinated and timely support to the field, due to challenges in securing the required technical expertise on the ground, at the right time. Furthermore, the increase in requests to participate in coordination meetings and joint activities, alongside new requirements for joint reporting, showed that being responsive to UN-wide processes and initiatives requires substantial commitments in terms of time and resources.**

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The pandemic has therefore reinforced long-standing questions around ILO's capacity to develop and run significant programmes in its non-resident countries or whether such programmes necessitate some presence to fully coordinate and promote ILO's interests. Some UN resident coordinators interviewed during the HLE maintained that it is **inevitable that other agencies will take over work within ILO's core areas**, since the Organization does not support its mandate with adequate resources at field or subregional level. HLE country cases showed that this has already occurred in a number of national COVID-response activities, where earlier ILO inputs have been followed up by other agencies, in the absence of appropriate ILO staff.

ILO's high-profile role in the UN Development System's response to COVID-19 has led to many new partnerships and commitments, intended to help enable the world to recover from the pandemic in a just, equitable and environmentally sustainable manner. **If fully implemented, these will take the Organization way beyond its previous regular programmes in terms of their scope and scale.** Since labour and employment are critical aspects of a global recovery, ILO has established itself as key stakeholder in the efforts of the development community to support this process. The initial stages of recovery have shown changes in labour markets, with many workers deciding that some sectors are too risky to re-enter and new sectors picking up increased demand. Moving forward through COVID recovery and beyond, ILO will need to focus on reducing the scale and effects of divergent recovery, including the unequal effects of the pandemic, with major burdens falling on women, vulnerable people and youths.

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66 ILO, *Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: Ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2020 and 2021 (partial)*, 2021.

67 ILO, *Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations, 2020 and 2021 (partial)*.

68 MOPAN, “Assessment of the ILO. Overview”, p. 3.

69 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

The major challenge will now be for ILO to deliver on its substantial new commitments, made as part of the overall UN COVID response. This can only be done through collaboration with a broad range of other bodies, to ensure both technical and financial sustainability of changes catalyzed or delivered. The recent MOPAN assessment highlights the need for the ILO to increase its impact through large-scale interventions with multi-donor participation and partnerships:<sup>70</sup>

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**There are avenues for addressing the ILO's resource challenges through its partnerships. The organisation can capitalise on experiences gained from its financially self-sustaining multi-donor programmes. It can proactively identify synergies with development partners, leverage resources with other UN agencies, and build stronger ties with partners beyond its traditional ones. Deepening its collaboration with IFIs has particular potential, as their policies and analytical and support programmes, with a global reach and impact and backed by significant resources, bear a strong potential to leverage normative work, while allowing the IFIs to draw on the ILO's assets and add a new quality to their work.**

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Overall, ILO showed considerable readiness and capacity at policy level to respond to the COVID pandemic and greatly raised its profile in the international development landscape. In the HLE's surveys, staff and constituents rated engagement and collaboration with UN and other multilateral partners quite highly (see Paras. 218 and 222). At the same time, it is clear that this process was highly stressful on the Organization and pushed its capacity to the limits of its current structure and systems. If the many commitments made and targets set to achieve impact in the global recovery process are to be achieved, it seems inevitable that ILO will have to make substantial changes to the way it has been operating during "normal" times.

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70 MOPAN Assessment Overview, p 4.




## PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING THE ILO'S RESPONSE

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The ILO issued guidance on adjusting its planning, monitoring and reporting systems to capture the change of focus created by the pandemic, but in practice the tracking of its COVID-19 response through the RBM system was deficient.
- ▶ Results were often reported inconsistently and poorly.
- ▶ The nature of COVID-related changes made to CPOs were often not clearly visible via the Decent Work Results dashboard. It was often difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of actions without knowing what these actions were expected to achieve.

With the 2020–21 P&B only eight months into implementation when the pandemic hit, the ILO had to find a way for its established planning, monitoring and reporting systems to quickly adapt and to track its COVID responses. On 22 April 2020, PROGRAM issued *COVID-19: Guidance on the delivery of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21* which instructed rapporteurs on the measures introduced by HQ to adequately monitor and report on the COVID-19 adaptations and re-purposing in development cooperation actions. It emphasizes that ILO's priorities set out in P&B 2020-21 would remain as priorities and as an overarching framework into which COVID-19 responses could be factored. It acknowledges that the increase in requests to respond to COVID-19 would demand "adjustments in the focus and pace of the programme implementation" noting that:

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 **Global deliverables set under the outputs of the Programme and Budget might have to be re-oriented or de-emphasized to the advantage of others that acquire greater relevance in view of evolving demands and circumstances. Country-specific strategies may also require revision. Adjustments in this respect will need to fit within the four interconnected pillars of the ILO framework for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as it affects the world of work.**

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At the planning level, the implementation planning module for 2020–21 in IRIS was revised to identify planned ILO responses to COVID-19.<sup>71</sup> This revision included two new fields of information. The first was a dedicated section to add text elements of the strategy of a CPO or a GP addressing COVID-19 response. The second was a flag (yes/no format) to allow tracking of the correspondence between resourcing and reporting on achievements and results. The latter was then referred to as the "COVID-19 tag". As many as 106 Member States and territories followed this guidance note,<sup>72</sup> and more than one third of the CPOs planned at the start of 2020 and all GPs were adjusted based on it.<sup>73</sup>

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71 ILO, *COVID-19: Guidance on the delivery of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21*, 2020.

72 ILO, [Report of the Director-General. Sixth Supplementary Report: The response of the International Labour Office to the COVID-18 pandemic](#), GB.340/INS/18/6

73 GB.340/INS/18/6

The guidance note referred to the OBWs for the biennium and the ILO Programme Implementation Report 2020–21 as being the reporting channels to demonstrate the work performed by the Office in relation to the response to COVID-19. To ensure fruitful discussions between OCTs and field offices, the first OBW review of the biennium, due in June 2020, was deferred until December 2020, to cover the results from January to December 2020. This measure included the development of a dashboard to effectively monitor progress, and the facilitating role of PROGRAM in communicating between OCT leaders and field offices. Virtual meetings for the OBW review were open to all people involved (for example, a senior ILO officer referred to meetings for one outcome being attended by more than 200 people, something not possible pre-pandemic). The revised reporting system provided rapporteurs with a text box to describe the COVID-19 response actions related to each CPO or GP.

Planned developments in the monitoring and reporting systems aim to better align within the results-based management (RBM) system the programmatic and financial dimensions. One senior ILO officer said this would align CPOs, DWCPs and P&B outcomes for the first time, facilitating the tracking of resources to CPOs and outputs, and making relevant data available before results are reported. From the perspective of this HLE team, this would be a great improvement, allowing more timely and accurate analysis of effectiveness and efficiency of ILO's policy actions.

Other perspectives on the monitoring and reporting systems within HQ referred to weaknesses in the current approach of dollar-value. This approach uses expenditure as a measure of effectiveness. A senior ILO officer stated that “We don't measure properly what we are trying to achieve” and that “spending on delivery is not a good measure of effectiveness for project activities”. This is so because, with the same dollar, activities cutting across different policy actions are possible. However, IRIS is designed to allocate one dollar for one marker rather than allowing the same dollar to have a multiplying effect. This posed challenges in reporting on the SDGs, for instance, and in reporting the ILO's COVID-19 response. Alternatively, the delivery of outputs in comparison with plan could be emphasized as a measure of effectiveness.<sup>74</sup> ILO has a staff member participating in the UN future data cube initiative, in New York, to examine this approach of financial reporting and effectiveness of actions for the United Nations.<sup>75</sup> Another option for improving monitoring is analysing volumes of activity from the flow of financial resources in different policy areas. These volumes would talk more about what people actually realize. ILO has a system that monitors this but does not use it to assess effectiveness.

Ultimately, the ILO's tracking of its COVID-19 response through the RBM system was deficient. Some adjustments were made at the planning stage to some CPOs, but the nature and intent of these changes were not visible through the Decent Work Results dashboard – often they could only be inferred. This meant that the HLE was placed in a position of evaluating the effectiveness of actions without always knowing exactly what these actions were expected to achieve.

Despite the tracking adjustments made to the monitoring and reporting system that were described above, details of results were often imprecise or poorly reported. For example, some rapporteurs used the text box to explain the link between CPO results and the ILO's COVID-19 response, but others used it to describe general contextual information about COVID-19 or simply left it blank. There were also probably many examples of effective ILO COVID response actions which, for whatever reason, were not attached to a reported CPO result and so remained invisible.

The HLE developed an analytical strategy designed to overcome, as much as possible, these deficiencies in the reporting of the ILO's COVID-19 response. Results of the analysis are set out in **Section 4.7**.

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74 ILO, Implications of COVID-19 for delivery of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21 (GB/34/PFA/2), 2021.

75 UNSDG-UNSCB, Data standards for United Nations system-wide reporting of financial data (New York, NY; 2022).

The ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) also updated its procedures and protocols to ensure continued accountability and real-time learning on the effectiveness of existing and new development cooperation projects. Within two weeks of the pandemic being declared, EVAL published [Practical tips](#) on how to conduct and manage ongoing and planned evaluations. In October 2020, it published a [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#), which served as a model of "what" should be evaluated based on the ILO's policy response framework and outlined adaptive approaches towards planning and managing project and programme evaluations. It also published a paper on [evaluative lessons from past crises](#) and the [synthesis review](#) used in this HLE.

Results from the external ex-post quality appraisal of evaluation reports from 2020–21, commissioned by EVAL, showed that the overall quality ratings for evaluations in 2021 were above those from 2019. This suggests that the various measures taken by Evaluation Managers and EVAL, including updated and new tools and checklists and extending the timelines of evaluations, may have had positive effects on the overall quality of evaluation reports. All survey respondents consulted for this study found the relevance, clarity and applicability of the evaluation protocol (mentioned above) to be "satisfactory" or above.

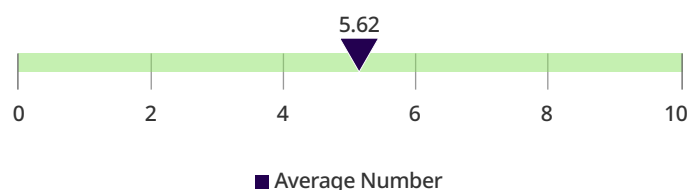
## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEYS

### Staff

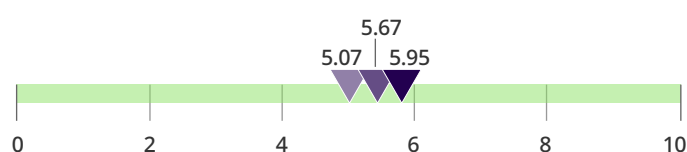
The staff survey included questions designed to measure staff opinions on the ILO's institutional response to the pandemic in terms of overall preparedness, the things it did well in its response, obstacles faced, the responses that should be continued, obstacles faced in the response, and its collaboration with other UN agencies.

In terms of **overall preparedness** for the crisis, staff were asked to rate how well the ILO managed the uncertainty and unpredictable changes in the early stages of the pandemic, such as adapting existing activities and adjusting its work to new priorities. On a 10-point scale where zero denoted "not prepared at all" and 10 denoted "very well prepared", the overall average score across the organization was 5.62. Within this a somewhat higher average rating of 5.95 was given to the ILO's preparedness for the development, adaptation and implementation of ILO's institutional and administrative policies, and procedures to ensure business continuity. More senior ILO staff in the field rated preparedness higher with an average score of 7.0 given while development cooperation project managers gave a lower rating of 4.25. Note that this question was not a measure of how well the ILO adapted, but how well prepared it was to make such adaptations (figures 5 and 6).

**FIGURE 5: ILO STAFF SCORES ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE OFFICE TO MANAGE THE CRISIS RESPONSE (AVERAGE SCORE)**



**FIGURE 6: ILO STAFF SCORES ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE OFFICE BY TYPE OF RESPONSE (AVERAGE SCORE)**



- ▼ Design (re) and/or implementation of projects and activities
- ▼ Policy development, advice, advocacy and research
- ▼ Development, adaptation and implementation of ILO's institutional and administrative policies, vprocedures, measures and activities

The survey also asked staff to identify the **"top three successes"** (if any) of the ILO's institutional response during COVID-19. **"Occupational Safety and Health for ILO staff"** was by far the most frequent response (77.1 per cent), followed by "Information Technology tools and platforms" (35.9 per cent) and "Knowledge management and dissemination of information" (35.1 per cent). In terms of the top three successes that staff believed should be continued, "teleworking" was the top response followed by "digitalization", "communication", "ILO Monitor" and "agility".

The “top three obstacles” identified to the Organization’s swift response were “human resource flexibility, putting staff where needed” (37.9 per cent), “Programmatic agility and shifting the P&B to meet constituent needs” (31.9 per cent), and “financial agility and re-purposing of Regular Budget funds” (30.2 per cent). Staff responses to the “top three shortcomings” that compromised the impact of the ILO’s actions were “bureaucracy”, “coordination” and “communication” (figures 7 and 8) .

**FIGURE 7: STAFF VIEWS ON THE MAIN SUCCESSES OF THE OFFICE IN ITS RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**





**FIGURE 10. SURVEYED CONSTITUENTS AND PARTNERS SCORES ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE OFFICE BY TYPE OF RESPONSE (AVERAGE SCORE)**



**Business continuity** – 56 per cent of constituents reported that the ILO had strengthened their **capacity to continue their work during the pandemic** to either a “very significant extent” (23.2 per cent) or “an extent” (33.3 per cent). Another 31.9 per cent said the ILO had strengthened their capacity “to some extent”.

**Collaboration and complementarity** – constituents considered the ILO had collaborated with other UN agencies with 48.6 per cent in the top two ratings, although another 30 per cent said they did not know. Similarly, in terms of complementarity of the ILO’s work with that of these agencies, other development actors and national governments, 51.4 per cent gave a top two rating and 25.7 per cent said they did not know.

**Efficiency** – constituents were asked how they rated the institutional efficiency of the ILO across several categories. The highest ratings of efficient or very efficient were given to “use of expertise and knowledge available” (81.1 per cent), “timeliness in the dissemination of ILO’s policy and knowledge products” (68.5 per cent), and “timeliness in delivering technical advice and services” (67.3 per cent). These ratings were all significantly higher than those given by staff which were 67.7 per cent, 60.8 per cent and 54.0 per cent, respectively.

**Top three successes** – constituents ratings reflected the staff ratings with “**Occupational Safety and Health for ILO staff**” (65.4 per cent), followed by “Knowledge management and dissemination of information” (49.1 per cent) and “Information Technology tools and platforms” (38.1 per cent) the highest. In terms of the top three successes that constituents believed should be continued, the most frequent responses were “communication”, “social dialogue”, “international labour standards” and “technical support”.

**Top three obstacles** – constituents’ ratings were also similar to the staff ratings, with “**human resources flexibility, putting staff where needed**” seen as the biggest obstacle to a swift response during the pandemic, followed by “financial agility and re-purposing of regular budget funds” (34.1 per cent) and development cooperation funds (29.3 per cent). Constituents’ responses to the “top three shortcomings” that compromised the impact of the ILO’s actions were “financial support”, “resource mobilization” and “international labour standards” (figures 11 and 12).

**FIGURE 11: CONSTITUENTS AND PARTNERS VIEWS ON THE MAIN SUCCESSES OF THE OFFICE IN ITS RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



**FIGURE 12: CONSTITUENTS AND PARTNERS VIEWS ON THE MAIN OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED BY THE OFFICE IN ITS RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**







# 04

▶ Policy action in the pandemic

## ► Policy action in the pandemic

### EVOLUTION OF THE ILO'S POLICY RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

#### KEY POINTS

- The ILO began considering policy responses well before the pandemic was declared and, careful to avoid mistakes from previous crises, shaped its framework to ensure a human-centred recovery.
- Its initial “four pillars” policy framework reflected the Centenary Declaration, and this shaped the ILO's work through the earliest stages of the crisis in 2020.
- Inspiring global action through a true tripartite agreement was the next step and, following months of consultation with constituents, the “Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient” was formally adopted at the June 2021 ILC. This also reflected the Centenary Declaration and set out the leadership and support role envisaged for the ILO.

Senior ILO staff told the evaluation team that the ILO began considering possible policy responses to COVID-19 as early as January 2020. Having relatively recent experience of epidemics in Asia, ILO Decent Work Team specialists in Bangkok had begun to work with the Employment Department in Geneva to consider the implications of this new outbreak. As COVID-19 cases started to spread to Europe, the Middle East and the Americas in February, it became clearer that a global crisis was looming and that its impact on the ILO's work could be substantial. An informal team was formed in HQ that reported on the potential impact on jobs and incomes, initially to the DDG/POL and soon after to the DG and constituents.

Lessons learned in the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–9 were not forgotten. In that crisis, when recovery came, it was at a macroeconomic level and without a corresponding recovery in employment.<sup>76</sup> Senior management agreed that the world “could not afford to make this mistake again” and that ILO needed to champion a “human-centred recovery” and to ensure decent work was at the centre of policy responses. As one department director said, the view at the time was “if the ILO can't take centre stage now, when can it?”

In this context, the ILO drew on both the knowledge and technical capacity of its policy departments and the frontline understanding of management and staff working in the field to quickly put together a strategy and framework to guide its work in response to the pandemic. This took the form of a policy brief, released in May 2020 – A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Based on international labour standards and aligned with the 2020–21 P&B and the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, this document set out key policy messages around “four pillars”:

<sup>76</sup> ILO, *Global Employment Trends* (Geneva: 2010) p. 9.

- ▶ Pillar 1 – Stimulating the economy and employment

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- ▶ Pillar 2 – Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

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- ▶ Pillar 3 – Protecting workers in the workplace; and

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- ▶ Pillar 4 – Relying on social dialogue for solutions.

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In the absence of any policy instrument approved by the GB or the ILC, this initial framework shaped the ILO's response through the earliest stages of the crisis in 2020. It provided a policy basis for determining how country strategies could be adapted or re-prioritised, what global knowledge and capacity development initiatives could be pursued, and how resources could be re-allocated. As one senior manager said:

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**Global deliverables set under the outputs of the Programme and Budget might have to be re-oriented or de-emphasized to the advantage of others that acquire greater relevance in view of evolving demands and circumstances. Country-specific strategies may also require revision. Adjustments in this respect will need to fit within the four interconnected pillars of the ILO framework for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as it affects the world of work.**

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Inspiring global action through a true tripartite agreement was the next step. At its 340th Session (October-November 2020), the GB saw the need for a “global response for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is sustainable and resilient”. It asked the Director-General to commence consultations with constituents on the form of such a global response and the process to reach tripartite agreement<sup>77</sup>. Initial consultations identified “building blocks” which were considered by the GB at its 341st Session (March 2021). These included many of the elements of the ILO's “four pillars” framework but canvassed a broader and more detailed range of potential actions. These could be used as inputs in developing an “outcome document” for consideration at the June 2021 ILC.<sup>78</sup>

Over the following months, there were continuing consultations with constituents on these “building blocks” which culminated in the adoption at the ILC of the *Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient*. Through it, governments and employers' and workers' organizations committed to “working individually and collectively and with the support of the ILO for a human-centred recovery”. Like the ILO's initial framework, the Call to Action had four parts. It listed these as “urgent actions to advance a human-centred recovery” but grouped them differently:

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77 GB.340/HL/PV, para. 78

78 GB.341/INS/4, para. 12

- A. Inclusive economic growth and employment (combining elements of Pillars 1 and 2 related to economic, fiscal and sectoral policies, and employment and enterprise policies and services).
- B. Protection of all workers (aligned with Pillar 3 but highlighting the need to address fundamental rights violations and to execute a transformative agenda for equality, diversity and inclusion).
- C. Universal social protection (included as part of Pillar 2 but given more prominence as a separate action area in the Call to Action).
- D. Social dialogue (aligned with Pillar 4 and emphasizing its importance in shaping recovery plans and action at regional, national, sectoral and local level).

The Call to Action was also more explicit about the leadership and support role envisaged for the ILO in advancing a human-centred recovery. Focusing and accelerating its implementation of the Centenary Declaration, the ILO would “strengthen its support of Member States’ recovery efforts”, “leverage the support of other multilateral organizations”, and contribute the efforts of the UN system in delivering the 2030 Agenda (Para. 12). Specific support measures related to four action areas above were also listed (Paras. 13, 14, 15) and, along with the actions described under the initial four-pillar framework, will be used later to evaluate the ILO’s actual responses.

The nature of the ILO’s response is explored in detail below. The staff survey conducted by the HLE gives an insight into their perceptions of the relevance of actions taken in various policy areas, though it must be noted that, as one respondent commented, “it is difficult to assess what other departments are doing and whether there is really a different approach than before the crisis”. In response to the question “Do you think that the ILO is taking the necessary steps to design and implement recovery actions that are relevant to the needs of constituents?” protection of all workers rated highest (79 per cent “yes”, 7 per cent “no”), followed by universal social protection (77 per cent “yes”, 6 per cent “no”) and economic growth and employment (70 per cent “yes”, 11 per cent “no”). Perception of the ILO sectoral and Just Transition work were less favourable, but around a third of respondents in these two policies areas responded “don’t know” suggesting awareness of the activities in these specialist policy areas was a factor.

The staff survey also gauged perceptions of how well the ILO incorporated some key guiding principles and policy drivers in its work. **Eighty-six per cent said that the ILO’s COVID recovery actions were framed in a way that promoted international labour standards, 84 per cent said it shaped actions through social dialogue and tripartism, 80 per cent said it sought to “leave no one behind” in terms of gender and vulnerable groups, and 67 per cent said it sought to maximize synergies with other development partners.**

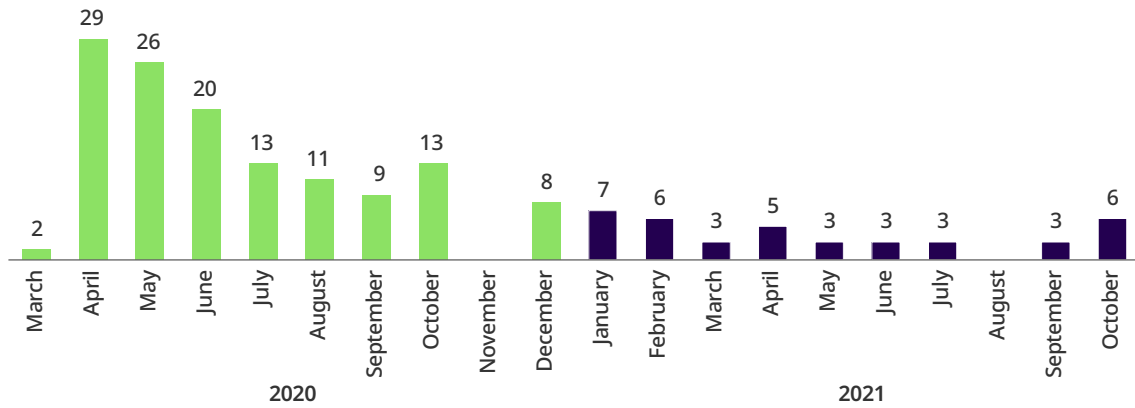
## THE ILO'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE – IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND GUIDING POLICY

### KEY POINTS

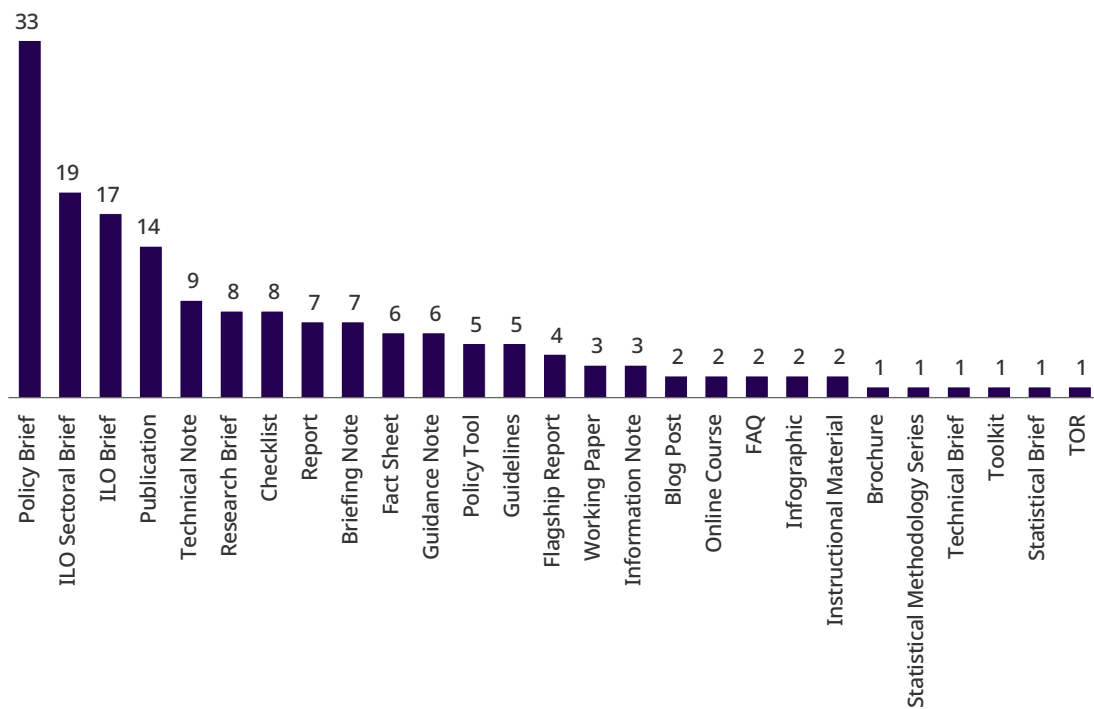
- ▶ The ILO was quick to produce data, statistics and knowledge products to guide its constituents. In the first 18 months of the pandemic, the ILO produced more than 170 COVID-related policy publications.
- ▶ Policy publications aligned with the four-pillar policy framework and, cutting across all pillars, the Office prepared a series of 19 sectoral briefs to assist constituents in assessing the impact of the pandemic in specific sectors and to highlight existing ILO tools and instruments to help sustain enterprises and protect workers.
- ▶ While the relevance of some of the early policy publications was questioned, coordination of knowledge product development subsequently improved, but there were still some inefficiencies and duplications.
- ▶ Production of knowledge products during the crisis highlighted the benefits of improved internal collaborations and coherence – the *ILO Monitor* being the prime example.
- ▶ Much of the knowledge work done by the ILO in the period required a high level of innovation and, given constituent demand, efficiency in delivery.

The ILO responded swiftly to the COVID crisis by providing data, statistics, and knowledge products to guide its constituents. On 18 March 2020, one week after the pandemic was declared, the ILO published the first issue of what was to become a series of nine publications – *ILO Monitor: “COVID-19 and the world of work – impact and policy responses”*. The second issue came out three weeks later to provide information about the impact of the crisis on the reduction of hours worked. On 24 March, ACTRAV released a note showing why the ILO Recommendation No 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience (R205) was an effective instrument for governments, employers and workers organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic. On 30 March, ACT/EMP published three guides to support employers and business membership organizations in managing the workplace and in assessing the needs of enterprises in the pandemic. April 2020 saw a peak in the number of knowledge products released by the ILO's departments (Figure 13).

Several factors contributed to the prompt development by the ILO of COVID-related knowledge products. Some informants reported that the ILO had learned lessons in the 2008-09 Global Financial Crisis of the need to respond quickly to set the agenda for labour market action in the crisis – as one said, there was a perception that the ILO “missed the boat” in responding to the previous crisis too slowly and narrowly. Informants also referred to the leadership of the ILO's Director General who stressed the importance of developing a clear picture of needs and priorities of member States, and delivering a focused response backed with policy publications that offered practical solutions at a country level.

**FIGURE 13 NUMBER OF COVID-19-RELATED POLICY PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED BY THE ILO PER MONTH**

In 18 months, from March 2020 to October 2021, the ILO produced more than 170 COVID-related policy publications. Knowledge products took primarily the form of policy briefs, sectoral briefs, and other publications conveying data and analysis along with practical recommendations (Figure 14). To ensure visibility and facilitate access to these data and knowledge products, the ILO launched on 1 April 2020 the [COVID-19 Information Hub](#). The Information Hub also summarized country policy responses by governments and social partners in each of the 187 Member States of the ILO. It was updated regularly and served as a knowledge-sharing platform for constituents. By the end of 2020 it was reported to have been visited 162,211 times, with peak traffic of around 4,000 visits per day in early May 2020. A majority of policy publications conveyed concrete guidance and recommendations.

**FIGURE 14: NUMBER OF COVID-19-RELATED POLICY PUBLICATIONS PER TYPE**

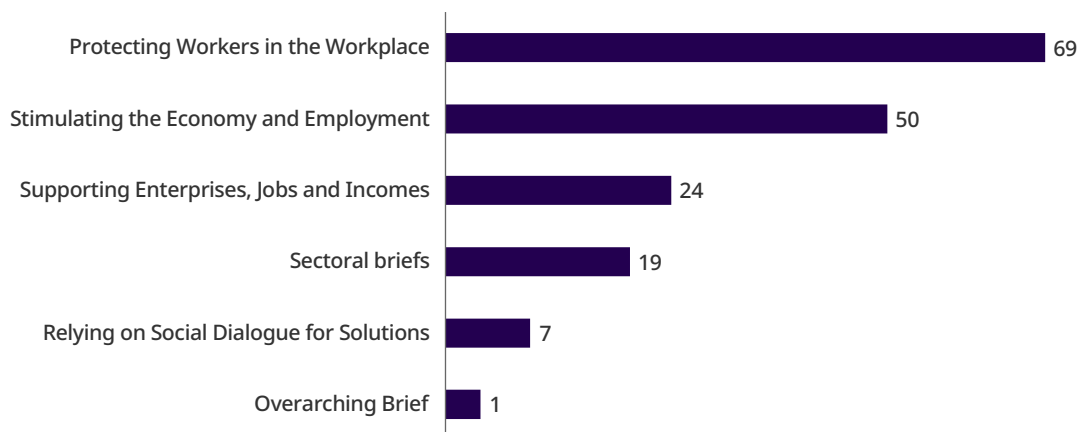
In some cases, the ILO based its knowledge products and policy guides on the researched needs of different audiences. For instance, the Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch (INWORK) conducted a survey of field colleagues to identify priority needs in supporting constituents – an approach that represented closer and more responsive collaboration between the field and HQ. About 120 people responded, leading to the development of new resources to support emerging needs (for example, health guidelines for street vendors). Similarly, frequent requests from constituents about the application of the international labour standards in the COVID context led NORMES to develop a FAQ that served as a policy guidance tool, covering areas like teleworking that had generated many calls for guidance. Constituents consulted by the evaluation also assessed positively the sectoral briefs produced by SECTOR, praising the fact that they were “prepared with constituents for constituents”.

Knowledge products were also adapted to the emerging needs of target users. The *ILO Monitor* evolved from concentrating on global trends to providing regional data as well as statistics relevant for enterprises. In some cases, national knowledge products were also scaled to the global level. For example, some global tools released by the Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch (LABADMIN/OSH) were based on initiatives developed in the field, like a tool developed for domestic workers in Latin America.

Policy publications aligned with the four-pillar policy framework (see **Para 228**). The highest number of knowledge products addressed issues around the protection of workers in the workplace – reflecting to some extent the urgent need to address this issue in the early stages – followed by stimulating the economy and employment and supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes (Figure 15).

Cutting across all pillars, the Office prepared a series of 19 sectoral briefs to assist constituents in assessing the impact of the pandemic in specific sectors and to highlight existing ILO tools and instruments to help sustain enterprises and protect workers. Sectoral briefs and tools were produced in collaboration with other UN agencies and with sectoral employers’ and workers’ organizations. For example, the ILO actively worked with UN agencies, governments, and social partners in the maritime industry to find solutions to maintaining shipping operations despite severe mobility limitations, and to guarantee seafarers’ rights, in particular access to health care, shore leave and repatriation. The ILO advised constituents and other partners on the implementation of the [Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended](#) in this context, including by publishing an information note on maritime labour issues and COVID-19.

**FIGURE 15: NUMBER OF COVID-19-RELATED POLICY PUBLICATIONS PER PILLAR OF THE ILO'S POLICY FRAMEWORK**



In some cases, evaluation informants expressed reservations about the responsiveness of the ILO and the relevance of some policy publications. Some said the ILO's consultative mechanisms "slowed things down" too much in some cases. In contrast, some also commented that, to speed up delivery, the ILO had been more "top-down" than usual. As for the added value of the knowledge products, several informants, including constituents, questioned the relevance of some of the early policy publications. As one said, "at the start, it was almost a competition on who could produce the most briefs" and "while some papers were good, some were the result of staff at home wanting to make a contribution". Over time more coordination of knowledge product development was introduced through the DDG/POL. The coordination and review process was put in place after a call from the Director-General for prioritization, stronger predictability, coherence, focus and applicability of the knowledge products. As for the coordination part, it involved near daily meetings with DDG/POL and Cabinet which consolidated two lists, one for the COVID-related knowledge products that the departments proposed to develop, and a second list compiling published publications. As for the review part, ACT/EMP and ACT/TRAV were involved in reviewing all papers, prior to DDG/POL and Cabinet. Some informants mentioned the usefulness of the process with many improvements or corrections brought to the papers. Some regretted that this overall coordination and review process was dropped after the peak of the crisis, noting that the Organization was now "blind" again as not knowing what will come up except for the flagship and major publications which are covered by the Publications Board. Coordination between departments improved as a result, but there were some gaps. SECTOR was not directly engaged at first in the policy coordination process, creating some problems, for example, both SECTOR and LABADMIN/OSH found out that they were both working on similar "Safe Return to Work" guides. Furthermore, the evaluation found the coordination and review process HQ centric with the knowledge products produced in the regions largely out of sight. Furthermore, knowledge products developed by ACT/TRAV and ATC/EMP were also not part of this coordination and review process and not integrated into the list consolidated by DDG/POL and Cabinet. This overall situation may have nurtured the perspective the evaluation sometimes encountered of overlaps or inconsistent messages remaining between knowledge products.

Despite such reservations, **staff and constituents had an overall positive perception about the relevance of the ILO's knowledge products.** In particular, the *ILO Monitor* was praised for its timeliness, relevance, and usefulness. For example, during the 340th Session of the GB, a Government representative of the United Kingdom commended the *ILO Monitor*, highlighting the need for a high-level, authoritative, and employment-focused assessment of the impact of the pandemic, and encouraged the Office to continue producing those assessments quarterly. During this event, a worker spokesperson also said to the GB that "the ILO Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work, the ILO Monitor and the COVID-19 Information Hub all highlighted the key role that the ILO had to play at a time when the world of work had been hit extremely hard by the pandemic".<sup>79</sup> The HLE surveys reinforced this positive finding with staff and constituents rating highly the efficiency and speedy development of knowledge products (see Para. 223).

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79 ILO, Minutes of the 340th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. GB.340/PV (2020).



Much of the knowledge work done by the ILO in the period required a high level of innovation and given the substantial demand from constituents, efficiency in delivery. ILO's Statistics Department (ILOSTAT) saw increased requests for technical support for different strategies to enable countries to produce data. Many faced a two month "blackout" period when no data could be collected. Initial interest was around unemployment statistics, but soon there was demand for ILOSTAT support in new areas, such as collecting data on teleworking and working hours for home workers. Reliance on household survey-based data presented challenges during the early days of the crisis. Many countries could only reach telephone users, requiring the ILO to assess ways of recognizing biases in data created by these changes. To capture the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on labour markets more accurately, the ILO needed to innovate and to introduce new methods for generating global estimates. Again, this was done in very quickly – the estimates in the second *ILO Monitor* (issued on 7 April 2020) were based on a new ILO "nowcasting" model, which relied on real-time economic and labour market data to predict the loss in working hours in the second quarter of 2020.

Production of knowledge products during the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the benefits of improved internal collaborations and coherence across ILO departments and between HQ and the field, but it also demonstrated the continuing institutional challenge of sustaining these improvements. Supervised by the Director-General, the *ILO Monitor* was frequently mentioned as having triggered increased collaboration between HQ departments, with EMPLOYMENT engaging, for example, with ENTERPRISE, STATISTICS, and RESEARCH for data and analysis, and driving improved coherence within the organisation. The *ILO Monitor* was not only based on the work of economists and statisticians but also harnessed the knowledge and expertise of policy specialists, bringing together teams of people who were otherwise "often rivals, to produce together the Monitors". The *Monitors* also provided a platform for strengthening collaboration between HQ and field offices. Regional economists in Asia and the Pacific, for example, contributed to the development of the publication. The benefits of such collaborations within HQ and between HQ and the field need to be sustained. As the ILO's Research Department reported:<sup>80</sup>

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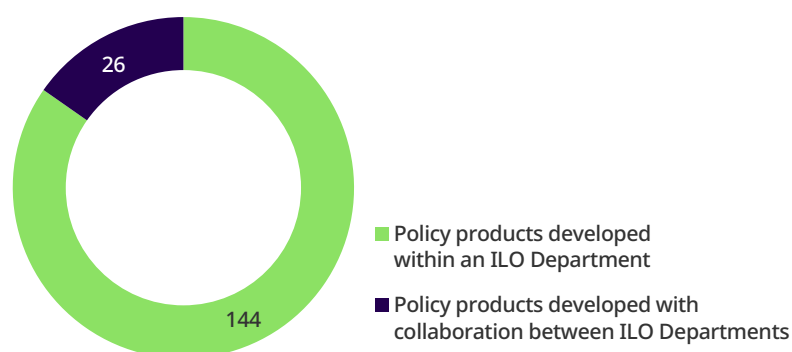
 **Research outcomes have seen the strongest outreach when done through cross-departmental and cross-regional collaboration. The COVID-19 crisis situation fostered successful cross-departmental collaboration resulting in the widely circulated ILO Monitor. Catalysed by senior management such collaborative approach could become the norm for the future to generate authoritative research products that speak directly to the interests of the constituents.**

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80 ILO, Outcome-based Work planning (OBW). Outcome A: Authoritative knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work. Annual progress report, 2020.

While the crisis increased cooperation between departments and the field in the production of knowledge products, resulting in 15 per cent of COVID-related policy publications being developed through a joint effort between several departments (see Figure 16, institutionalization of this approach remains uncertain. As highlighted in a previous evaluation, “The ILO’s internal collaboration and teamwork can be harnessed well in unique situations, such as with the [research and knowledge management] dimension of the COVID-19 response. However, the more typical dynamic is limited, with compartmentalization at headquarters and inconsistent engagement between headquarters and the field”<sup>81</sup>. Several staff stressed the need for increased coherence within the ILO, reporting that there was room for more cross-departmental teams, more synergy, structured mechanisms to encourage collaboration, and more frequent interactions between policy portfolio directors and Regional Directors. Some also mentioned room for better capitalizing on the Global Technical Teams to facilitate spontaneous horizontal exchanges and mutual support, including when short turnarounds times were needed.

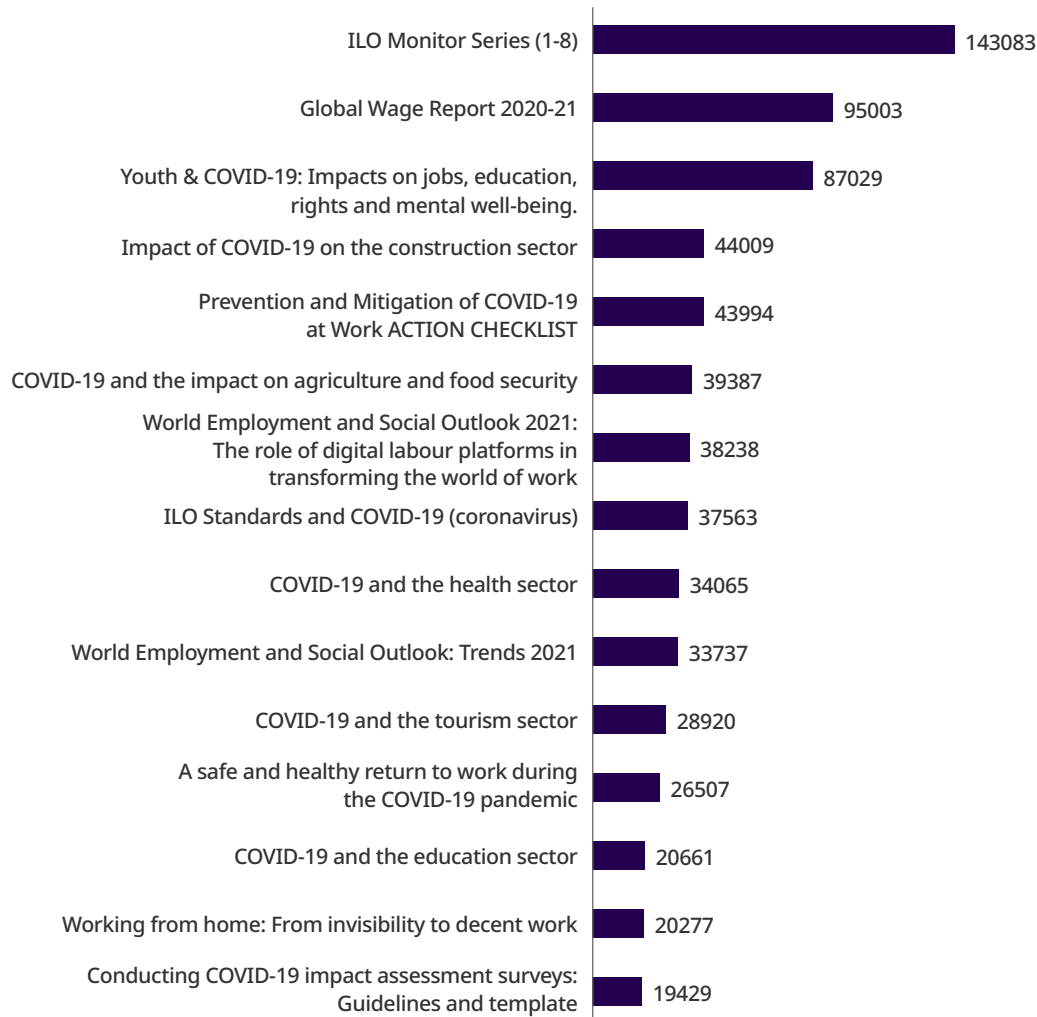
**FIGURE 16: COVID-19-RELATED POLICY PUBLICATIONS BASED ON INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION**



Evaluating the extent to which these knowledge products have reached their target audiences and, more importantly, have been applied is not an exact science but there are some indicators, such as the number of downloads (Figure 17). In general terms, the ILO’s outreach, public engagement, and media coverage grew substantially during the COVID crisis. The audience of most of the ILO’s digital platforms multiplied, especially the ILO Newsroom and new web platforms such as ILO Voices, ILO Talks, Twitter and LinkedIn. Instagram engagement increased by over three times in 2020–21. Data and analysis from knowledge products were disseminated at high-level events. For example, the Director-General cited data from the ILO Monitor at the spring meetings of the World Bank and the IMF on 16–17 April 2020 and at several G20 meetings, such as on 20 April 2020 and during the G20 Leaders’ Summit in Saudi Arabia on 22 November 2020. Evaluation informants reported that the Office achieved its highest ever media coverage during the pandemic. As the synthesis review highlighted, “The ILO response to the COVID-19 crisis through inter alia the ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work offers another example of global reach and uptake. The report has been widely quoted by the media (for example, The Financial Times, the BBC, Le Monde) and influenced the UN’s global response as well as regional and national policies on multiple topics related to the world of work”.

81 ILO, ILO’s response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic – A synthesis review. Evaluation Office, 2021.

82 Constituents from Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific, found the policy guides and tools prepared by the ILO more useful than constituents from Africa and the Arab States.

**FIGURE 17: NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS OF THE MOST ACCESSED POLICY PUBLICATIONS<sup>82</sup>**

Other evidence found by the evaluation team of the use and uptake of the *ILO Monitor* and, to varying degrees, other COVID-related policy publications included feedback provided at GB meetings;<sup>83</sup> feedback from trade unions on the usefulness of tools and checklists produced by SECTOR and OSH guidance; and a 29 per cent increase in ILO research citations from multilateral organizations.<sup>84</sup> According to Overton,<sup>86</sup> the *ILO Monitor* has been cited more than 600 times in policy documents (Figure 18), primarily by international governmental organizations but also by think tanks and governments (Figure 19). The World Bank is one of the institutions that has cited the *ILO Monitor* the most (Figure 20). This figure can be benchmarked with records on the number of citations of key ILO flagship reports such as the Global Wage report and the Work Employment and Social Outlook, which only in 2019 received 291 and 629 citations, respectively.<sup>87</sup>

83 For example, a Government representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) said that GRULAC welcomed the publication of the *ILO Monitor*, which facilitated assessment and guided preparedness; also, a Government representative of Thailand, speaking on behalf of ASEAN, welcomed the *ILO Monitor* and sectoral briefs, pointing out that reliable information was a key factor in COVID-19 response.

84 For example, in the mining sector, global trade union INDUSTRIALL that embraced and applied the checklists; similarly, in Jordan, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania with OSH guidance; in Tunisia, they were reported as an inputs into wider policy initiatives.

85 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

86 Overton is a private company that monitors references to publications in policy documents. Overton has indexed more than 5.1 million documents from more than 1,500 policy sites that host documents from over 25,000 organizations. <https://www.overton.io/>

87 *ILO, High-level independent evaluation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches, 2010–2019.*

FIGURE 18: CITATIONS OF THE ILO MONITOR

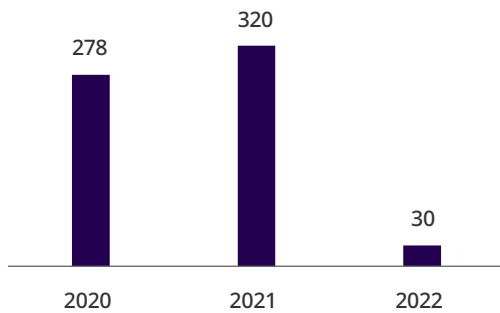


FIGURE 19: CITATIONS BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

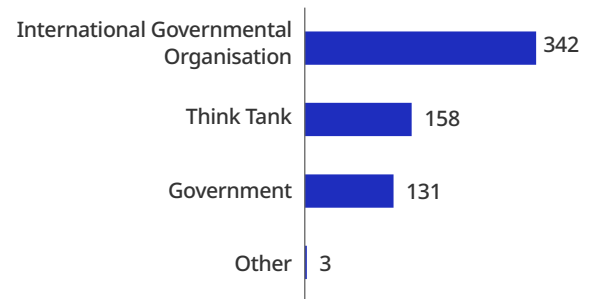
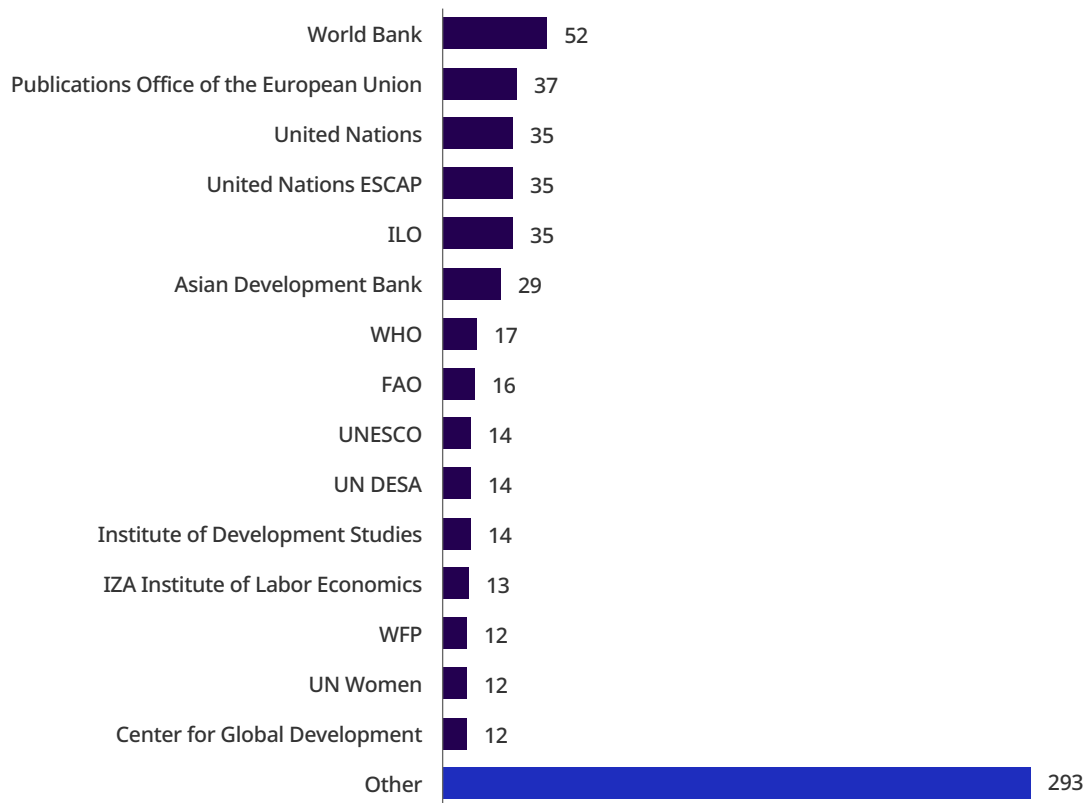


FIGURE 20: ORGANIZATIONS CITING THE ILO MONITOR



## ACTION PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

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**▶▶ A world of work already in transition, as a result of demographic shifts, technological disruptions and climate change, descended further into disarray as the pandemic continued. Few had anticipated that the pandemic would last this long or cut so deep."**

▶ World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022

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### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The pandemic had severe effects on jobs, enterprises, and skills that were felt in different ways and to varying degrees around the world. The ILO had to accommodate this diversity while implementing its responses in line with its policy framework and the Call to Action.
- ▶ Rapid assessments of the country-level impact of COVID-19 on the economy and labour market were conducted in more than 47 countries. Results were reported to have influenced National Employment Policies in several countries.
- ▶ A global survey on youth and COVID-19 examined the experience of young people in the pandemic including job loss and decline of working hours, effects on education and training and mental health.
- ▶ A tool was developed and applied in 14 countries to assess reskilling and upskilling needs in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Capacity-building courses for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions were delivered remotely via ITCILO and CINTERFOR.
- ▶ Countering the threat of enterprise failure brought on by the pandemic and its potentially devastating effect on jobs and incomes was quickly seen as a priority. The ILO scanned global best practices in supporting enterprises, distributed weekly updates, produced enterprise support recommendations for policy-makers and constituents as well as knowledge products to directly support enterprises.
- ▶ Enterprises Department's programmes and services all contributed to the ILO response and were quickly adapted or digitalized to ensure their continued delivery; SCORE introduced new COVID-related modules in Business Continuity Planning (BCP) and OSH; value chain analyses were conducted to support recovery; a rapid assessment tool was introduced to measure impacts in the informal economy; COVID-19 resources related to Responsible Business Conduct by Multinational Enterprises were developed; the Green Jobs Programme promoted Green Jobs and Just Transition as part of the recovery; and a new training programme, SURE, was developed in partnership with ACT/EMP to strengthen the resilience of small business in the face of crises.

## Context

The pandemic's effects on labour markets around the world were severe – millions of jobs were lost, enterprises shut down, poverty increased, skills development was disrupted, and decent work gains were reversed. At a global level, the ILO has been a leading institution in analysing and communicating these effects and in highlighting the policy challenges they present both in the immediate crisis response stage and in the long-term recovery. **Table 1** sets out some of the key global effects and trends brought about by the pandemic on labour markets.<sup>88</sup>

At a regional level, the pandemic created new challenges in promoting inclusive economic growth and employment and gave new prominence to existing policy problems:

- ▶ In **Africa**, the pandemic has further highlighted the need for macroeconomic and sectoral policies that can diversify the labour market and employment growth beyond its current reliance on subsistence agriculture and self-employment in the informal economy. As the *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022* points out, “even if economic growth picks up, a return to the pre-crisis baseline for Africa’s labour market will not be sufficient to repair the damage caused by the pandemic.”
- ▶ In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, increased “de-formalization” of the labour market flowing from the pandemic is a real risk – support for the creation of more jobs in the formal sector and the formalization of enterprises is needed.
- ▶ In the **Arab States**, labour force participation is expected to surpass pre-crisis levels in 2022 in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries but is expected to remain lower than the already low pre-crisis levels in non-GCC states.
- ▶ In **Asia and the Pacific**, the pandemic labour market effects varied greatly between countries but, as a whole, the equivalent of 130 million full-time jobs were lost in 2020 and more than 2 million people fell below the extreme poverty line. The disruption of the tourism sector was especially felt in the Pacific subregion.
- ▶ The pandemic's effects on labour markets and growth in **Europe and Central Asia** were similarly diverse as are the prospects for recovery. Governments in Northern, Southern and Western Europe mitigated employment losses through retention schemes and labour market recovery in 2021 and 2022 has been strong. In Eastern Europe, a shift to informal work mitigated job losses to some extent, but despite this 2.7 million people either became unemployed or exited the labour force. The labour market situation of young people deteriorated.

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88 ILO, [World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022](#) (2022).

TABLE 1: LABOUR MARKETS AND THE PANDEMIC – KEY GLOBAL EFFECTS AND TRENDS

Issue	Main global effects and trends
Jobs, incomes, and poverty	8.8 per cent of global working hours were lost in 2020, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. <sup>89</sup> 77 million people were pushed into poverty and another 31 million into extreme poverty. <sup>90</sup> Recovery in 2021 was modest in many parts of the world and employment has not returned to pre-pandemic levels <sup>91</sup> though in advanced economies labour markets have tightened with a growing number of jobs available relative to job seekers. <sup>92</sup>
National employment policies	Trend accelerated towards new generation of national employment policies with scope expanding beyond labour market governance to include trade policy, sectoral policy, inclusiveness for women and vulnerable groups, and social protection. Development requires broader input from multiple stakeholders and ministries. Subnational action plans are increasingly being considered as part of these policies. <sup>93</sup>
Active labour market policies (ALMPs) and public employment programmes (PEPs)	Increased use of ALMPs, particularly in advanced economies, including employment subsidies, job-retention schemes, support for workers facing reduced hours of work or temporary unemployment. Public employment services adapted their case management systems, combining ALMPs and social protection policies including cash transfers. <sup>94</sup> In the recovery, PEPs are being used to improve labour market re-integration.
Young people	Youth employment fell by 8.7 per cent in 2020 compared with 3.7 per cent for adults. Many worked in sectors badly affected by the pandemic. The number not in employment, education or training (NEET) has risen, risking long-term exclusion of these young people from the labour market. <sup>95</sup>
Women	The-job loss rate was higher for women than for men in 2020 – 4.2 per cent versus 3.0 per cent. <sup>96</sup> Women were employed in sectors most affected by the pandemic. Many women entrepreneurs struggled to balance the demands of their businesses with care/domestic work.
Informality	Initially, informal employment did not play its usual counter-cyclical role of absorbing displaced formal sector workers and experienced higher job losses. More recently, labour informalization has accelerated, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. <sup>97</sup> Recovery in countries with large informal economies was slower than in advanced economies. <sup>98</sup>
Skills	Early in the pandemic, 90 per cent of training centres and almost all work-based learning stopped due to enterprise closures. <sup>99</sup> This especially affected young people in their transitions from education to the workforce. Remote learning expanded, excluding some vulnerable groups.

89 ILO, "COVID-19 and the world of work", *ILO Monitor* (7th ed.).

90 World Bank and IMF, *COVID-19 recovery must be human centred*, Statement, 9 April 2021.

91 ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022*.

92 ILO, "Press Release: *Labour market recovery goes into reverse*", 23 May 2022.

93 ILO, *Report V of 110th Session of International Labour Conference. Responding to the crisis and fostering inclusive and sustainable development with a new generation of comprehensive employment policies*, ILC.110/Report V (2022).

94 ILO, "*Delivering income and employment support in times of COVID-19: Integrating cash transfers with active labour market policies*", Policy Brief, June 2020.

95 ILO, "*An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis*", Statistical Brief, June 2021.

96 ILO, "*An uneven and gender-unequal COVID-19 recovery: Update on gender and employment trends 2021*", Policy Brief, October 2021.

97 Roxana Maurizio, *Technical Note: Employment and informality in Latin America and the Caribbean: An insufficient and unequal recovery*, ILO, September 2021.

98 ILO, *G20 Leaders' Summit: Great divergence threatens economic and employment recovery*, October 2021.

99 ILO, *Skilling, upskilling and reskilling of employees, apprentices and interns during the COVID-19 pandemic: Findings from a global survey of enterprises*, 2021.

Digital transformation of labour markets	Jobs in the platform/gig economy accelerated during the pandemic, both as a job option for those who lost their jobs and a mechanism for enterprise resilience. The ILO faces challenges in balancing the opportunities this growth presents with other decent work goals.
Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)	MSMEs faced closures, job losses, and reductions in hours worked (larger than those experienced by larger firms). Lack of access to capital and higher debt threaten viability. Capacity for diversification, improved productivity and access to supply chains were weak. MSMEs in the informal sector cannot access government support.
Enabling environment for enterprises	The pandemic exposed weaknesses in the enabling environment for business in many countries including the legal and regulatory framework, financing, measures to facilitate formalization, and support for improved innovation/diversification and resilience to economic shocks/crises. <sup>100</sup>
Multinational enterprises (MNEs) and global supply chains	MNEs and their supply chains were severely affected, foreign direct investment and trade flows collapsed, and decent work deficits in supply chains were exacerbated. <sup>101</sup> More firms may choose to near-shore or re-shore production and to automate it as a hedge against future disruptions. <sup>102</sup>
Social Solidarity Economy	Increased mobilization of SSE organizations and their members including in local crisis response and recovery actions and supply chain stabilization. Membership and turnover of cooperatives historically increase in crises. <sup>103</sup>

## ILO Action

Both the Call to Action and the ILO's four-pillar policy framework defined areas of policy action designed to **minimize the damage** caused by the pandemic on the quantity and quality of jobs and to **promote a broad-based, job-rich recovery** with decent work opportunities for all. These action areas build on the principles and priorities set out in the Centenary Declaration and, therefore, are closely parallel with the outcomes and outputs defined in the 2020–21 P&B.

The following sections describe the ILO's COVID-related actions and results in promoting **economic growth and employment**. They align with key 2020–21 P&B outputs and indicators related to **Outcome 3** (Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all), **Outcome 4** (Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work) and **Outcome 5** (Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market). The evaluation draws on a review of results described on the ILO's Decent Work Results dashboard for country programme outcomes (CPOs) and Global Deliverables,<sup>104</sup> evidence gathered from the case studies, the findings of the synthesis review, and other evidence identified through the literature review and web search.

In terms of the overall staff perception of the effectiveness of work across these diverse policy areas, the HLE survey indicated that 54.5 per cent of staff rated the effectiveness of the ILO's pandemic response work in economic growth and employment (for example, implementing projects and programmes in a manner that brings positive change) as being "satisfactory" or "highly satisfactory" with a further 22.3 rating it as "somewhat satisfactory" – see Para. 457.

100 ILO, "[Enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and the Post-COVID-19 rapid response](#)", Policy Brief, June 2020

101 ILO, "[COVID-19 and multinational enterprises: Impacts on FDI, trade and decent work in Asia and the Pacific](#)", ILO Brief, 8 April 2021.

102 ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022*.

103 ILO, "[News: Cooperatives and wider SSE enterprises respond to COVID-19 disruptions, and government measures are being put in place](#)", 24 April 2020.

104 As mentioned earlier, there were some limitations in the ability of the ILO's reporting systems to capture a detailed picture of all aspects of the Organization's response. To some extent, relevant results had to be inferred from the detailed descriptions on the dashboard.



## Integrated national employment policies

The ILO recognizes the importance of national employment policies (NEPs) as a means of generating full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work. The P&B promotes the pursuit of “a new generation of gender-responsive national employment policies, including for youth” (Output 3.1, Indicator 3.1.1). These integrate a wide range of national policy settings including macroeconomic, industrial, environmental, trade and public and private investment policies with traditional employment policy concerns relating to employment conditions, wages policy, labour market policies and services.<sup>105</sup> Recent ILO work on the UN Secretary-General’s Global Accelerator initiative has also more closely linked NEPs with social protection systems with the aim of accelerating the recovery and bolstering resilience against future shocks.<sup>106</sup>

In the context of the response to COVID-19, “integrated national employment policy responses” were promoted in the Call to Action (Para. 11.A.a) and play a key role in driving a human-centred recovery that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. The ILO works to increase the development of NEPs by providing research, technical guidance and support to constituents. The pandemic has introduced new labour market challenges that need to be navigated through this work. A specific policy brief on the place of NEPs in the COVID recovery was published in September 2020<sup>107</sup> and many of the other policy briefs and guides produced by the ILO in response to COVID-19 were also potentially relevant to NEP development, though their actual application is hard to measure.

One ILO knowledge product that was widely applied and reported to have influenced employment policy development in the context of the pandemic was the guidelines on **Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market**.<sup>108</sup> Developed by the ILO’s Employment, Labour Markets and Youth Branch (EMPLAB) and released in May 2020, this practical tool/methodology assisted the tripartite constituents to generate immediate, real-time information on the employment impacts of the pandemic (**Box 2**). Using these guidelines, **rapid assessments were conducted with strong tripartite engagement in 47 countries**, sometimes in cooperation with the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or regional financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Inter-American Development Bank.<sup>109</sup> As evidence of effectiveness, the information generated by these assessments was reported to have been applied in the development of NEPs. Of the 16 country programme results reported for 2020–21 under the relevant P&B Indicator 3.1.1,<sup>110</sup> **10 programmes described how progress in developing national employment policies had been advanced** using the rapid diagnostic tool.<sup>111</sup> In the Western Balkans case study, a Ministry of Labour representative in **North Macedonia** told the HLE that:

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105 The most recent report of the ILC’s Recurrent Discussion Committee: Employment (June 2022) lists 24 elements of “coherent, comprehensive and integrated employment policy frameworks”, ILC,110/Record No.6A (2022).

106 ILO and WHO, Concept note on the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transition. Draft for consultation (Geneva: March 2022).

107 ILO, “[National employment policies for an inclusive job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis](#)”, Policy Brief, September 2020.


108 ILO, “[Rapid diagnostics for assessing the country level impact of COVID-19 on the economy and labour market – guidelines](#)”, Technical Brief, 2020.

109 ILO, [Report of the Director-General. Sixth Supplementary Report: The response of the International Labour Office to the COVID-19 pandemic](#), GB.340/INS/18/6 (2020). Note that, for the majority of these rapid assessments, ILO-sourced funds were not required. The cited GB document said that assessments were done in “more than 47 countries”, suggesting that other countries had adopted the methodology, perhaps without ILO involvement.

110 3.1.1: Number of Member States with new generation of **national employment policies** addressing country-specific future of work challenges

111 Bosnia-Herzegovina (BIH128), Burkino Faso (BFA105), Gabon (GAB101), Guatemala (GTM127), Mozambique (MOZ101), North Macedonia (MKD130), Palestinian Occupied Territory (PSE126), Philippines (PHL102), Samoa (WSM902), and Serbia (SRB130)

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 **The ILO/EBRD analysis was pivotal for creating policy response. We could not implement specific measures without that analysis. The analysis had it all: the impact on workers and employers; vulnerable groups of workers; those in standard and non-standard forms of employment; the ones with contracts and in the grey economy. We also made analysis of the legal aspects of response to COVID.**

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In **Serbia**, the HLE learned that the assessment was less enthusiastically embraced by constituents. First, Serbia had to wait for the assessment to be made and needed it sooner. As one told the HLE: “The ILO is very slow. From the moment of the outbreak of COVID to the moment when the first survey was organized, a lot of time had passed.” When released, the report was highly visible, but the Fiscal Council of Serbia disagreed with some of the expert findings. Policy recommendations were discussed, but a key proposal for the Government to provide more targeted support, instead of giving small sums to everyone, was not adopted.

National employment policy results were also reported to have been linked to other ILO COVID-19 initiatives in some countries. These included assistance in designing a **simulation model to measure pandemic impacts** on the labour market (Gabon, GAB101), support in developing a **strategy to address COVID-19 job losses and labour migration issues** (Nepal, NPL126), and two COVID-19 employment recovery strategies which followed the **ILO’s four-pillar policy framework** (Paraguay, PRY128 and the Philippines, PHL102). Policy advocacy in the case study country, **Argentina**, included work with the new Economic and Social Council (CES), supporting its institutionalization, establishment of working groups (for example, on future of work), and the development of policy proposals and strategies (for example, for the formalization of domestic work).

Reported COVID-19-related results for global deliverables in support of NEPs (Output 3.1) included the rapid assessment tool described above as well as a long list of papers and policy briefs (see **Annex G: ILO COVID-19 policy publications**) and other initiatives intended to share knowledge and build capacity in NEP development including webinars and seminars<sup>112</sup>, an employment policy research symposium held in November 2021<sup>113</sup>, new training courses delivered through ITCILO<sup>114</sup>, and presentations to the G20 Framework Working Group on the employment impact of COVID-19 and jobs in the digital economy (used as inputs to the “G20 Menu of Policy Options for Digital Transformation and Productivity Recovery”).

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112 For example: Institute of Labor Economics and ILO, [“Taking stock of the COVID-19 crisis: the impact on the labour market and how countries have responded”](#) [webinar], 2021.

113 ILO, [“Employment policies for a job-rich recovery and a better future of work”](#) 4th Employment Policy Research Symposium, 15–16 November 2021.

114 For example, ITCILO, [“Macroeconomic and sectoral policies for a sustained job recovery”](#) [online course], April–June 2021.

## Youth employment strategies

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▶▶ **Recycling youth employment policies and interventions that may not have worked pre-pandemic will definitely not work in the post COVID-19 era. There is therefore a need to learn from experience and explore alternative ways to address the ever-increasing youth employment challenge.”**

▶ Barford, Coutts and Sahai, *Youth Employment in Times of COVID*, ILO, 2021.

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As indicated in **Table 1**, the already difficult labour market situation of young people was made significantly worse by the pandemic and there is growing concern about the long-term exclusionary effects of the crisis on this group. As was the case in other policy areas, the ILO's initial response focused on **research to better understand** the nature of the problems faced and the **development of policy briefs and tools**. To develop **constituent capacity**, online courses were delivered by ITCILO on the promotion of youth employment in the context of COVID-19. The NEPs described above were often focused on youth, but some countries also developed or adapted specific **youth employment strategies** with ILO support. Existing **development cooperation projects** also often needed to be re-purposed, sometimes struggling to achieve planned employment outcomes due to the COVID-induced deterioration of labour markets.<sup>115</sup>

**A global survey on youth and COVID-19**,<sup>116</sup> conducted in partnership with the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and generating over 12,500 responses from 112 countries, looked closely at the experience of young people early in the pandemic including job loss and decline of working hours, effects on education and training, and mental health. The survey complemented data collected via the rapid assessment tool which paid specific attention to youth labour markets at the country level. Regular youth labour market updates were also published.<sup>117</sup> Regional reports on youth employment were also published, for example, a joint [ILO-Asian Development Bank report](#) issued in August 2020.

The P&B includes “national strategies for youth employment” as an indicator (3.1.2<sup>118</sup>) under NEPs while the Call to Action includes as an area of action “decent work for young people, to maximize their potential as a source of dynamism, talent, creativity and innovation in the world of work” (Para.A.g). Nine of the 12 reported results against this P&B indicator described a link to COVID-19 responses including new or updated youth employment strategies and objectives that were part of national pandemic response plans and NEPs (**Chad, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Palestinian Occupied Territory, Philippines**), updated Youth Employment Action Plans (**Nigeria**), a programme document for youth job creation (**Democratic Republic of Congo**), and a review of strategic employment objectives (**Uzbekistan**).

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115 ILO. 2021. *ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic - A synthesis review*. Evaluation Office. Geneva. P.6

116 ILO, [Youth and COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being](#) (Geneva: 2020).

117 ILO, “[An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis](#)”, *Policy Brief*, 2021.

118 Other ILO results also related to its COVID-19-related work to support youth including employment services (Output 3.5, Indicator 3.5.1), skills and lifelong learning (Outcome 5), and the creation, preservation and formalization of enterprises (Outcome 4).

In the context of the EU's strengthening and expanding its **Youth Guarantee**<sup>119</sup> in response to the pandemic, the ILO has also recently started working with the EU and constituents in the **Western Balkans** to provide policy, programming and monitoring support for its introduction in this region. This approach offers all young people under 30 quality employment, education or training within four months of becoming unemployed. Constituents in **North Macedonia** indicated that ILO support was instrumental in establishing the programme which the Ministry of Labour said had created 6,700 jobs for youth.

### ► **Box 2: Rapid diagnostics for assessing the country-level impact of COVID-19**

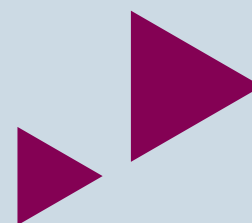
To help countries undertake immediate, real-time support in assessing the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and related policy responses, the ILO has developed guidelines for the conduct of rapid diagnostics. By completing such assessments, countries would be equipped with data to help them assess the impact of the crisis on employment in general and for specific sectors and groups including women, migrant workers and refugees, and young people. This would inform their policy responses, including by identifying any policy gaps.

The diagnostics have four components:

- Overview of socio-economic situation (for example, economic, demographic, labour market and health effects).
- Labour market transmission mechanisms (for example, impact of containment measures, effects on trade, sectoral impact including by firm size and formality, effects on prices).
- Identifying workers at risk (including by working status, location, age, gender, disability, HIV, indigenous and tribal peoples).
- Policy responses and gaps (for example, stimulus packages, sectoral support, enterprise and worker support, active labour market programmes (ALMPs) and public employment programmes, coverage and capacity gaps).

The model includes a step-by-step process for implementation.

As an example, from one of the HLE's case study countries, South Africa, conducted a Rapid Assessment and published its findings in August 2020.<sup>120</sup> It assessed the immediate impact of three possible contractions in final demand on employment by industry, gender, skill level, formality and wage-earning level. Following the ILO's four-pillar policy framework, the assessment set out detailed policy options (including resource estimates) for the Government of South Africa to consider, recommending that "swift and expansive action is required in a manner that does not hamper administration but also targets the sectors and demographics identified here as most at risk". It also warned that the labour market, already characterized by high unemployment, could be set back "by at least a decade" by the crisis.



119 European Commission, "[Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – the reinforced Youth Guarantee](#)".

120 Gilad Issacs, Josh Rosenberg and Patienne Passoni, [Rapid Country Assessment: South Africa. The impacts from a COVID-19 shock to South Africa's economy and labour market](#) (Geneva: ILO; 2020).

## Employment Intensive Investment/Public Employment Programmes and COVID-19

Employment Intensive Investment (EII) projects are a form of Public Employment Programme (PEP) that provide employment for workers who are unable to support themselves due to a shortage of market-based employment opportunities. Publicly financed and implemented by government or with the support of donor agencies, they can generate employment through infrastructure development, natural resource management and environmental rehabilitation, building social assets (such as water facilities) and through services for improving health care, education and sanitation. They have long been a tool used by the ILO to support the incomes and livelihoods of vulnerable rural populations in response to crises, including natural disasters and conflicts. The Call to Action highlights EII projects as an area in which ILO should increase its support (Para.13.a.i). In the P&B, EII was reported mainly against Indicator 3.2.1 (“decent work measures in rural areas”) and Indicator 3.4.1 (“peace and resilience programmes”). As one ILO informant explained, “Wherever there is vulnerability in employment, we have a role to play.”

The ILO's COVID-19 initial response in this area again included the development and distribution of **knowledge products**, in this case to support constituents to consider PEPs as a COVID policy response. Examples include: a **policy brief**<sup>121</sup> and a **promotional brochure**<sup>122</sup> on PEPs as a policy response to the crisis (including their role in supporting vulnerable groups, keeping the unemployed engaged with the labour market, addressing decent work deficits, and acting as an instrument for social protection); a **compendium of examples** of PEPs introduced in response to COVID-19 in 13 countries;<sup>123</sup> and a **technical note** on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions in response to COVID-19 in the context of EII projects.<sup>124</sup> **Guidance on adjusting labour practices** in response to COVID-10 were updated within a month of the pandemic being declared.<sup>125</sup> To complement these written resources, constituent capacity development included an online course delivered through ITCILO on designing PEPs for a sustainable recovery<sup>126</sup> and a **two-day webinar** on “Public Works and Public Employment Programmes: What role in socioeconomic recovery?”<sup>127</sup>

In terms of the effectiveness of these efforts in influencing policy, DEVINVEST staff indicated that there was a “clear appetite” for the guidance on adjusting labour practices and its timely provision was welcomed by constituents and applied, for example, in South Africa, ILO guidelines on COVID-19 prevention were mainstreamed into all public works programmes nationwide.<sup>128</sup> They acknowledged that the application of policy papers is hard to track: “We know we contributed in **South Africa, Tanzania, Jordan and Kenya**, and that **Tunisia** used some as inputs into wider policy initiatives. We know that countries have set up PEPs in line with our recommendations, but it is hard to directly attribute.”

Once the pandemic hit, the ILO's existing portfolio of EEI **development cooperation projects** all needed to be adjusted in response to lockdowns and to ensure participants remained safe and healthy.<sup>129</sup> Some, like a Japan-funded project in the **Philippines** (PHL/18/04/JPN) pivoted to provide more than 2,000 short-term jobs under the Community Emergency Employment Programme to support those who have been affected by COVID-19. In **Uzbekistan**, as a COVID-19 response, the ILO

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121 ILO, “[The role of public employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes in COVID-19 policy responses](#)”, Policy Brief, May 2020.

122 ILO, Public Employment Programmes (PEPs): Creating decent jobs through national investments, 2020.

123 Nikos Avgeris and Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, [Public Employment Initiatives and the COVID-19 crisis: A compendium of infrastructure stimulus, Public Employment Programs \(PEPs\) public works programs case studies](#) (Geneva: ILO EII; 2021).

124 ILO, “[Technical note on water, sanitation and health \(WASH\) interventions in response to COVID-19](#)”, EIIIP Guidance, 14 May 2020.

125 ILO, “[Adjusting labour practices in employment intensive works in response to COVID-19](#)”, EIIIP Guidance, 12 April 2020.

126 ITCILO, “[Training course: Designing Public Employment Programmes for a sustainable recovery](#)” [online training course], September–November 2021.

127 ILO, “[Public Works and Public Employment Programmes: What role in socioeconomic recovery?](#)” [webinar], October 2021.

128 Reported against CPO ZAF103.

129 For example, new COVID-19 OSH arrangements were mentioned in reported CPO results in Cameroon (CMR111), Jordan (JOR109), Mozambique (MOZ101), Sao Tome and Principe (STP803).

130 Reported against CPO UZB126.

was asked to carry out assessments aimed at increasing the capacity of the government-funded Public Works Programme. These led to the programme doubling the numbers employed to around 500,000 jobs (including 270,000 for women).<sup>130</sup> A new RBSA-funded project (UZH/22/02/RBS) builds on this work to develop innovative ALMPs for the post-crisis recovery.

DEVINVEST staff at HQ reported that there were also **new EII projects** introduced in the Asia-Pacific region as specific responses to COVID including:

- ▶ **Myanmar:** To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and armed conflict on remittance dependent communities, an EII project funded by New Zealand (MMR/20/02/NZL) created employment opportunities in rural infrastructure improvement.
- ▶ **Nepal:** In response to lost household income caused by COVID-19, an EII project funded through the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (NPL/20/51/UND) created employment in rural road maintenance works in two provinces.
- ▶ **Timor Leste:** To support COVID-19 recovery through RBSA funds, an EII project created employment for the rural poor in roads maintenance (involving constituents in design, implementation and monitoring). This built on previous programmes in this field in the country.

The synthesis review covered only one EII project, an initiative in Jordan (JOR/18/05/DEU) which began prior to the pandemic. The evaluation indicated that the overall job creation results of the project were adversely affected by lockdowns, restrictions and worker absences, but noted that these can be expected to be better in projects operating in the recovery phase. It also noted that concerns expressed about the short-term nature of the jobs created may be lessened in post-COVID-19 projects where such jobs can serve as a bridge to new opportunities that arise as part of economic recovery (pp. 19–20). Later development project evaluations covered two initiatives in which EII strategies were implemented as a recovery response to COVID-19. In Mozambique, public works trained 357 unemployed informal workers in labour-based construction techniques. Until 2021, 18,300 person-days of employment community were contracted, through agreements with municipalities, to perform rehabilitation works in peri-urban markets. In the Philippines, a Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP) on the construction sector was an approach primarily to target informal workers mostly economically vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19. The CEEP was repurposed from an original plan to fund works on the islands. Jobs provided through CEEP were green works in nature which, aligned to relevant government and ILO strategies, also contributed to greener communities and resilience to future impacts of climate change.

In the case study countries, **Iraq's** "Employment Intensive Investment Programme through Conservation of Cultural Heritage"<sup>131</sup> project with UNESCO, while not conceived as a COVID response, is being implemented in Erbil in a way designed to boost employment and income during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. Rather than a simple "cash for work" approach, the HLE learned that more sustainable jobs were being sought by engaging specialized private sector companies with the potential to transition participants into continuing formal employment. In **South Africa**, the ILO provided guidance to support the continued safe operation of the government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), a key part of President's Economic Stimulus and Recovery Plan.

Given the loss of jobs globally, HQ staff said that they had anticipated that they would have been more successful in mobilizing resources for EII projects, but apart from these new projects – all in Asia – this did not happen. Higher income countries used their own resources, but lower income countries generally did not attract donor funds for EII. Given the difficulties created by lockdowns and the need for a rapid response, HQ staff said that unconditional cash transfers may have been favoured instead with the ILO itself involved in some cash transfer projects during the pandemic

(see **Para. 387**). As there is no ILO corporate policy framework on emergency cash transfers (including how such measures should relate to EII projects or “cash for work” measures), the ILO needs to clarify its position on their use.

### Public Employment Services and Active Labour Market Programmes

In many countries, Public Employment Services (PES) and the Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) play a key role in governments’ policy response to the pandemic. In the initial phase, this support included **income supplementation for jobseekers** and workers (in some cases expanding such support to informal workers), **wage subsidies** for employers (to prevent retrenchments), and recruitment and training initiatives in support of **essential services**. In the recovery phase, PES facilitated **employment creation programmes** and other ALMPs, **re-hiring subsidies**, **self-employment initiatives** and **skills programmes**. The Call to Action recognized the importance of this and urged action to “strengthen national employment services...to mitigate crisis-induced economic and labour market disruption” (Para 11.A.f) and ALMPs (Para 13.a.i). In the P&B, related results were reported against indicator 3.5.1 (“member States with strengthened employment services”).

Nine of the 21 results reported against P&B indicators on strengthened employment services were flagged as relating to country COVID responses though this may have understated the relevant work done. Results included support to strengthen PES labour market analysis capability to develop programmes to support recovery (**Cameroon, Cuba and Mexico**<sup>132</sup>), to digitize PES services in the context of COVID (**Montenegro, Namibia**), to design wage subsidy programmes (**Namibia, Paraguay**), to extend employment services to informal businesses and workers (**Turkey**), and to improve employment services for youth and/or women (**Russian Federation, El Salvador, Thailand**). PES capacity to scale up PEPs was also reported (**Uzbekistan**).

Relevant knowledge products included an August 2020 Policy Brief, COVID-19: Public employment services and labour market policy responses<sup>133</sup> and, as a guide for important PES reforms in the recovery phase, a global report on technology adoption in PES<sup>134</sup> that was based on a global survey conducted in 2021.

An example from the case study countries is in **Montenegro**, where the project “Activate Women – Increased capacities for labour market inclusion of disadvantaged women as a COVID-19 response measure” promoted the participation of women in the labour market by supporting those with pre-school age children who were previously employed but who lost their job due to COVID-19 and remain inactive due to lack of access to childcare. The project provides a range of employment services, such as career guidance and job placement support, an unemployment allowance, a lump sum contribution to child-care costs, and subsidized on-the-job training to increase employability. A separate but complementary project, also with the EU, supports the country’s capacity to administer ALMPs through the digitalization of Montenegro’s PES.

**Skills** systems around the world were greatly disrupted by the pandemic while also having new demands placed on them that flowed directly from its effects. Skills development for young people making the transition from school to work was especially disrupted. The Call to Action committed the ILO to support Member States to “promote skills development opportunities that are responsive to labour market needs and support effective transitions for young people” (13.a.vi).

Priorities for ILO action included supporting systems to reskill and upskill workers in sectors hard-hit by the pandemic, facilitating the design and delivery of online and distance programmes due to the closure of schools, training institutions and workplaces, and the development of skills recognition systems, especially for returning migrants. To help shape action, early in the pandemic, the ILO conducted surveys to better understand the impact of the crisis on skills systems. These


included a global survey jointly launched by 10 international and regional development partners on the **impact of COVID-19 on staff development and training including apprenticeships and internships/traineeships**,<sup>135</sup> and a joint survey with UNESCO and the World Bank on **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development during the time of COVID-19**.<sup>136</sup>

A tool was developed and applied in 14 countries – Guidelines on Rapid Assessments of reskilling and upskilling needs in response to the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>137</sup> These informed ALMP design (for example, in Cambodia) and national and regional skills strategies designed to take advantage of opportunities in sectors with strong labour demand, for example, in the African Union Commission's Skills Initiative for Africa<sup>138</sup> (SIFA), the findings were subsequently supported by the donor, GIZ, which funded the retraining. In Latin America, ILO/CINTERFOR was a leader in researching and promoting role of vocational training in confronting the effects of COVID-19<sup>139</sup> and in supporting TVET institutions to adapt to the crisis (see **Box 3**).

In addition to developing numerous policy guides and papers on the **digitalization of skills systems**,<sup>140</sup> capacity building courses for teachers and trainers were delivered in partnership with ITCILO – for example, more than 400 teachers and trainers from Africa, the Americas, and Asia and the Pacific improved their capacities on digital transition of training programmes through an E-Learning Lab on Digital TVET. The Government of **Senegal** engaged the ILO to support more broadly the digitalization of its education and training systems with the ILO delivering capacity building to teachers and trainers on how to organize and run online programmes. In **Cambodia**, the ILO supported constituents and TVET institutions in digital transformation. In **Ukraine**, to maintain the continuity of vocational education during the pandemic through e-learning and blended learning, the ILO's E-TVET project (UKR/20/01/RBS) supported 708 TVET schools, 35,000 teachers and 139,800 students.

Supporting constituents in the digitalization of skills systems is clearly an important ongoing area of work for the ILO and the ILO's Skills and Lifelong Learning branch has institutionalized it in its operations by recruiting a specialist in this field. The ILO has also established a **Community of Practice on digitalization of TVET**. While this approach offers huge potential benefits in terms of scale, SKILLS staff also cautioned that there were potentially many people who stand to miss out on these benefits and that a blended approach will be needed:

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 **The crisis has led to two worlds – one that can telework and one that can't – and this is also reflected in the work of SKILLS. Hundreds of millions lack access to education and training because they have no access to the technology. How many agricultural workers in Africa can benefit from webinars? Are we just pretending to be reaching some people?"**

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133 [https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/areas/covid/WCMS\\_753404/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/areas/covid/WCMS_753404/lang--en/index.htm)

134 [https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS\\_840767/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS_840767/lang--en/index.htm)

135 [https://www.ilo.org/skills/Whatsnew/WCMS\\_743243/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/Whatsnew/WCMS_743243/lang--en/index.htm)

136 [https://www.ilo.org/skills/Whatsnew/WCMS\\_742817/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/Whatsnew/WCMS_742817/lang--en/index.htm)

137 [https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-training-for-poverty-reduction/WCMS\\_752822/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-training-for-poverty-reduction/WCMS_752822/lang--en/index.htm)

138 <https://skillsafrica.org/>

139 <https://www.oitcinterfor.org/en/node/7765>

140 [https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS\\_822790/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-policies-and-systems/WCMS_822790/lang--en/index.htm)



Work-based learning through apprenticeships was impacted by lockdowns and, in July 2020, the ILO ran, in conjunction with ITCILO, a **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Quality Apprenticeships** which was designed to support policy-makers and practitioners in the design and implementation of quality apprenticeships to address the challenges posed by COVID-19. This attracted 1,300 participants.

The ILO also developed innovative approaches to skills recognition to facilitate job placement of people affected by the pandemic. In a project in **Sri Lanka** (LKA/20/02/RBS), for example, ILO supports recognition of prior learning (**RPL**) through assessment and documentation of skills through the “Skills Passport” programme and offers apprenticeship-based training for returnees, blocked and aspirant migrant workers, especially women migrant workers. In **Cambodia**, the ILO supported an “e-RPL” process that facilitated the redeployment of retrenched tourism and hospitality workers by recognising skills transferrable to jobs in demand. An online platform to enable the recognition of skills of returning migrants in **Bangladesh** was also established. In March 2022, a MOOC on RPL was run for constituents to share these and other innovations in RPL for which there were 2,400 registrations.

The vastly expanded participation in ILO Skills activities and capacity building is an important development and has the potential to increase the scale and impact of the ILO’s work. It also makes it even more important for the ILO to find ways to better demonstrate the outcomes of this work in terms of ultimate beneficiaries. Training thousands more people via MOOCs is an impressive and easily measured output of the ILO’s work. Systematically assessing the application of learning by constituents and its impact on people is harder. ITCILO indicated that it is working towards a system, based on Quality Assurance principles, to evaluate results of its capacity building over a much longer term. The ILO needs to embrace such an approach more broadly. As one informant said:



**We issue policy guides and manuals and run webinars but we need to go the extra mile and find out how they were applied. There’s a fear about this in the ILO.”**

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141 [https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_815248/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_815248/lang--en/index.htm)

142 [https://www.ilo.org/budapest/what-we-do/projects/WCMS\\_753153/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/budapest/what-we-do/projects/WCMS_753153/lang--en/index.htm)

### ▶ Box 3: Case study – CINTERFOR

CINTERFOR is an arm of the ILO that works to develop vocational training at all levels. It coordinates a network of 66 entities in 28 countries mainly in Latin America, including TVET institutions, Ministries of Labour and Education and social partners. Its work includes capacity building and technical assistance for these entities, applied research on current priority issues, and incubating innovations in training and cooperation.

At the beginning of the pandemic, TVET institutions were at different stages of readiness for remote delivery – some already had experience and the challenge for them was to expand this while others had no experience at all. The challenges they faced included how to use technology, how to maintain contact with students, how to ensure equitable access for those who lacked connectivity and physical devices, and what content to use (for example, whether to buy it or develop it).

CINTERFOR acted quickly when the pandemic struck. In March 2020, CINTERFOR convened a videoconference with the leadership of the institutions to exchange information on the status of the situation in each country and institution and on their early responses. It also launched a survey of institutions to document and share their practices which led to the creation of the regional observatory "COVID 19: the response of the vocational training institutions", as a tool to share strategies, actions and resources.

Over the longer term, CINTERFOR realigned its capacity development services to meet the needs of its members, including through virtual courses and events, technical assistance, generation of spaces for cooperation, and producing new knowledge products. Examples include:

- ▶ Virtual courses on quality apprenticeships, National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), OSH in vocational training, and how to evaluate and certify virtual training. Virtual delivery enabled significant expansion in the numbers trained compared with face-to-face training (46 per virtual course on average compared with 15–20 face-to-face) as well as countries represented. In all, 690 people were trained in 2020–21 with 57 per cent being women.
- ▶ A total of 34 free and open virtual events were held, in which approximately 7,700 people participated. Topics related to both the immediate response to the crisis and the challenges of post-COVID recovery.
- ▶ Technical assistance, provided remotely, including NQF design (Panama), employability skills strategies (Nicaragua), and evaluating knowledge remotely.
- ▶ Approximately 40 events for the exchange of good practices and experiences were carried out, reaching more than 8,500 people from management, technical and teaching teams of the institutions.
- ▶ Support for six "Collaborative Innovation Projects", focused on developing products and solutions for shared use by institutions.
- ▶ A range of knowledge products linked to TVET in the context of the pandemic including, for example: The new normal and vocational education – the experience of four training institutions;<sup>143</sup> pre-apprenticeship programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean during and after the COVID-19 crisis;<sup>144</sup> the role of vocational training in the face of the effects of COVID-19 in Latin America;<sup>145</sup> and expanding the virtual world in vocational training – the potential of blockchain technology in skills certification.<sup>146</sup>

143 <https://www.oitcinterfor.org/nueva-normalidad-formaci%C3%B3n-profesional-aportes-experiencia-cuatro-instituciones-formaci%C3%B3n-0>

144 [https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/cinterfor/PPA\\_ALC](https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/cinterfor/PPA_ALC)

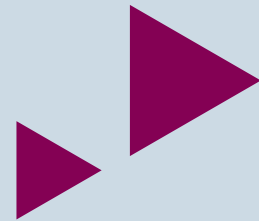
145 [https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/oitcinterfor/Ep\\_covid](https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/oitcinterfor/Ep_covid)

146 [https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/notas/Blockchain\\_FP](https://www.oitcinterfor.org/publicaciones/notas/Blockchain_FP)

### ▶ Box 3: Case study – CINTERFOR (cont'd.)

CINTERFOR is a small organization with a staff of 15 who periodically teleworked (March–June 2020; December 2020–June 2021). According to the people interviewed, working during the pandemic meant more demanding hours and a significant increase in the number of daily (virtual) meetings, which "left little space to produce, to investigate". The office invested in technology to enable remote delivery of its services. Resources, including RBTC and XBTC funds were made available. All of the above allowed CINTERFOR to expand its response capacity and respond well to the complexities of the pandemic. As one informant put it:

"During the pandemic, we were able to take the pulse of the [TVET Institutions] and provide them with a rapid response. Our response capacity was tested in the pandemic and came out positive (...) we have come out of the crisis strengthened."



## Supporting enterprises

Countering the threat of enterprise failure brought on by the pandemic – especially among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – and its potentially devastating effect on jobs and incomes was quickly seen as a priority by constituents. The Call to Action outlined how supporting enterprises should play a vital role in promoting inclusive economic growth and employment including by supporting “business continuity and an enabling environment for innovation, productivity growth and sustainable enterprises including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises” (Para 11.A.d); more resilient supply chains that contribute to decent work, sustainability of enterprises and environmental sustainability; and protection of human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (Para 11.A.i). Enterprise formalization was also highlighted (Para 11.A.k).

Senior HQ staff said that initially a small team of researchers was engaged to scan global best practices in supporting enterprises and to distribute weekly updates on findings. Early in the pandemic, a survey<sup>147</sup> of 1,066 enterprises in eight countries (participants in the SCORE programme) was run to identify needs and to shape the ILO's response. More regular virtual meetings of the Global Technical Team (which, in the past, met only infrequently) facilitated the exchange of information and ideas across the Organization culminating in an innovative strategy development “marketplace” that ITCILO helped to run.

Over time, **enterprise support recommendations for policy-makers** were brought together on a dedicated web page/portal<sup>148</sup> which included sections with knowledge products on enabling business continuity, preparing for recovery, and COVID-19-related advice on informal enterprises, global supply chains, SMEs, and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE).

Many COVID-19 **knowledge products were also developed for enterprises** to guide them through the crisis. These covered business resilience and diversification, OSH, teleworking, wages during COVID, managing employee work-life balance, and adhering to international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. One HQ informant said that practical tips on adapting business operations to the crisis became a focus, for example, restaurants adapting to home delivery, manufacturers adapting to produce PPE, marketing tips to demonstrate COVID-safe practices. Such information was disseminated via social media and through IOE networks.

Developing such resources brought challenges. Given the urgency of the problems faced, “speed to market” for such resources became a challenge. Staff were reported to have been inundated by requests by constituents for support and that this led to working long hours and some morale problems. Resources developed for use by individual enterprises were often quickly developed in response to urgent needs identified in the field and with perhaps less than usual input from ACT/EMP in HQ. Some programmes of the Enterprises Department which normally relied on face-to-face contact, including social finance and cooperatives, could not as easily switch their work to remote delivery. Online delivery also presents other challenges – as one informant from the Department said, “the biggest challenge is that so many products are offered online and so many of them are free.”

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147 [https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/projects/WCMS\\_745097/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/projects/WCMS_745097/lang--en/index.htm)

148 [https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/covid-19/WCMS\\_816493/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/covid-19/WCMS_816493/lang--en/index.htm)

Only a handful of enterprise-related **development cooperation projects** were developed as specific responses to COVID-19 have so far been evaluated, but of those that have, evaluations were generally positive about their relevance and effectiveness, noting some inefficiencies (for example, deploying staff) and the lack of some important impact data (such as, improvements to livelihoods). Examples include:

- ▶ “Healthy Socio-Economic Recovery of the Micro and Small Enterprise Sector”<sup>149</sup> project in **Sri Lanka** which achieved results in the procurement/distribution of PPE kits, OSH training, communication campaigns, access to finance (A2F) support through banking clinics and value chain financing (VCF), training of medium-sized enterprise (MSE) women entrepreneurs, and psycho-social support (PSS) activities.
- ▶ “Mitigating the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the employment and income of self-employed women workers in the informal economy in **Bolivia**”<sup>150</sup> was found to have strengthened beneficiaries’ business management skills, improved their use of digital communication tools and social media marketing, and helped them connect to finance and formalization schemes.
- ▶ “Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of **Fiji, Palau, Tonga, and Vanuatu**”<sup>151</sup>, supported by ILO, UNDP, IFAD, and UNESCO, responded to the pandemic-related needs of informal enterprises in the cultural and creative industries including via business development services. Sustainable results included the establishment of formal associations providing a voice to government on the needs of the informal sector in these industries.

The Enterprises Department administers **programmes and services** that closely align with the areas of activity outlined in the Call to Action. In response to COVID-19, these were adapted to meet the changing needs of constituents and new services were added to fill identified gaps:

## SCORE

The Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme was adapted so that training could be delivered either completely online or in a hybrid mode. All 10 SCORE implementation countries implemented the online programme which added new COVID-19-related modules in Business Continuity Planning (BCP) and COVID-19 OSH training. A total of 300 enterprises were reported as having completed the BCP training.<sup>152</sup> To enhance the ILO’s response, SCORE also conducted SME surveys on the impact of COVID-19 in eight countries.<sup>153</sup> Against planned CPOs, 13 countries reported that SCORE was part of their COVID-19 response under indicator 4.2.1.

Country-based adjustments to SCORE delivery were also made. For example, in China, the programme is delivered independently by the national organization, the SCORE Academy, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO. Apart from switching to online training and consulting, the programme delivered country-specific services to better equip SMEs to adjust to COVID-19 (for example, Peru, Ecuador).

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149 LKA/20/50/UND

150 BOL/20/50/UND

151 RAS/20/53/UND

152 A report supplied by the SME Branch indicated that training had been delivered in Ghana, Bolivia, Tunisia, Georgia, and Myanmar

153 Bolivia, China, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Myanmar, Peru, and Tunisia

154 Bangladesh (BGD101), Cambodia (KHM204), China (CHN253), Ecuador (ECU160), Indonesia (IDN129), Mauritius (MUS108), Myanmar, Peru (PER157), South Africa (ZAF101), Tunisia (TUN103), Turkey (TUR154), Vietnam (VNM129), and Zimbabwe (ZWE103)

## Value chain development

Sixty sectoral value chain analyses were conducted in 2020–21 to support recovery from the crisis and income generation for poor and vulnerable groups.<sup>155</sup> The potential of the Market Systems Development approach in creating more resilient SMEs and market systems was promoted in a guidance note – “Why settle for recovery? A guidance note on building back better micro and small enterprises and resilient market systems during crisis and after lockdown”.<sup>156</sup>

## Enterprise formalization

Guidelines for the conduct of rapid assessments of COVID-19 impacts on enterprises and workers in the informal economy were published in April 2020.<sup>157</sup> A Q&A document on how COVID-19 affects micro and small enterprises was published in September 2020.<sup>158</sup>

### ► Box 4: Case study – Bosnia-Herzegovina: EU for Business Recovery – adjusting a project to meet COVID needs

THE EU4BUSINESS project is jointly implemented by GIZ, UNDP and ILO. The implementation was planned from April 2018 to March 2022. With the aim of strengthening Bosnia-Herzegovina's economy, the EU4Business project stimulates the development of entrepreneurship, export-oriented sectors, tourism and agriculture. Final beneficiaries are companies, farmers and entrepreneurs, with a special focus on women and youth. The results will be measured by new jobs, increased exports and sales and strengthened use of EU funds in the future.

The project is worth EUR 16.1 million overall, out of which EUR 10 million is available in grants. It is jointly funded by the European Union (EUR 15 million) and the German Government (EUR 1.1 million). EU4Business is part of the Local Development Strategies – Local Self-Government and Economic Development Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

With the outbreak of COVID-19, the project was adjusted to new circumstances. An additional activity, THE EU4BUSINESSRECOVERY project, was established, extending the existing partnership between ILO, UNDP and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). This project is expected to run from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2023 and is partnered by the European Commission's EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a budget of EUR 3.250 million. It aims to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on agricultural and tourism enterprises, micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the metal, wood-processing, and textile/apparel/footwear sectors, as well as on entrepreneurs and farmers. The project aims to ensure business continuity to preserve existing jobs and thus to reduce negative social consequences, such as unemployment, poverty or migration.

According to ministries of the Republika Srpska involved with the recovery project, ILO's contribution was extremely important in the field of support to trade unions and workers, especially for the textile sector because of the high number of workers in it. On the project level, ILO played a cohesive role. Also, it was lead agency for the segment related to the textile/apparel/footwear sectors; and provided guidelines for safety and health at work for employers. Also, ILO disseminated the guidelines for a grant application and actively promoted the EU for Business Recovery among entrepreneurs.

155 Including in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Morocco, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Egypt, Lebanon, Uganda, Zambia, Nepal, Moldova, Cameroun, Somalia

156 [https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS\\_757916/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_757916/lang--en/index.htm)

157 [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS\\_743032/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743032/lang--en/index.htm)

158 [https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS\\_755276/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_755276/lang--en/index.htm)

### ► **Box 4: Case study – Bosnia-Herzegovina: EU for Business Recovery – adjusting a project to meet COVID needs (cont'd.)**

In terms of areas for improvement, ministries felt that the effects of the capacity building and grants were unclear and that this should be improved. Appropriate measurement systems should be introduced. This weakness may have been partly because of the pandemic.

Overall, For the ministries in Republika Srpska the ILO's actions were seen as very important, as the consequences of COVID-19 were extremely negative in this entity. In such types of projects, the ministries have only a supervisory role without any executive powers, and ILO has done its best to ensure that the projects meet the set targets and more. The ministry stakeholders described ILO as an independent entity, proactive, providing great knowledge transfer to its constituencies.

Source: HLE interviews, June 2022, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **Entrepreneurship training**

The long-running Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme was adapted for online delivery in 2020.<sup>159</sup> This “e-SIYB” product was deployed in over 30 countries and includes modules to support SMEs to digitalize their own operations. The Women’s Entrepreneurship Development programme, GET Ahead, was also digitized. Recognizing how childcare accessibility affected women entrepreneurs during COVID, the ILO revised its assessment methodology for programme establishment to cover this dimension. Against planned CPOs, nine countries<sup>160</sup> reported that SIYB was part of their COVID-19 response under Indicator 4.2.1. Some region-specific entrepreneurship programmes (such as the activity-based C-BED product in Asia-Pacific and the Women Do Business tool in Jordan) were also linked to the COVID-19 response.

## **Enabling environment for enterprises**

The ILO worked with constituents to identify and address constraints in the enabling environment for sustainable businesses in the context of COVID-19<sup>161</sup> though demand for implementing the ILO’s existing EESE programme in new locations was reported to have diminished. Against planned CPOs, three countries<sup>162</sup> reported that work on the enabling environment was part of their COVID-19 response under Indicator 4.1.1.

## **Small business resilience**

A new training programme was developed in partnership with ACT/EMP to strengthen the resilience of small business in the face of crises. The Sustainable and Resilient Enterprises (SURE) programme was successfully piloted in Iraq, South Africa and Trinidad and Tobago in 2021 with employers’ organizations and business development services delivering the training. A tourism sector-specific application of the programme, funded by GIZ, will be rolled out in two countries adversely affected by the pandemic (see **Box 5**). ENTERPRISES also partnered with McKinsey and Company to develop a framework of initiatives that can help small firms in developing countries to navigate crises and build resilience.<sup>163</sup>

159 [https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/start-and-improve-your-business/WCMS\\_759261/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/start-and-improve-your-business/WCMS_759261/lang--en/index.htm)

160 Bangladesh (BGD101), Cabo Verde (CPV101), Ecuador (ECU160), Honduras (HND801), Iraq (IRQ126), Mali (MLI103), Myanmar (MMR127), Senegal (SEN103), Uganda (UGA128).

161 For example, in Georgia (GEO126), North Macedonia (MKD105), Moldova (MDA104), Suriname (SUR127)

162 Costa Rica (CRI131), Georgia (GEO126) and Moldova (MDA104).

163 <https://www.mckinsey.com/about-us/new-at-mckinsey-blog/partnering-with-the-international-labour-organization-to-help-small-businesses-in-developing-economies>

### ► Box 5: The SURE programme

In the process of aligning its existing array of programmes and services to meet the needs of enterprises during the pandemic and in consultation with ACT/EMP, representatives of the Enterprises Department identified a significant service gap. There was nothing currently available that could support SMEs to be prepared for and effectively respond to crises – pandemics or otherwise. With funding provided by GIZ, in 2020–21 the ILO began developing a new pilot programme that was to become SURE – Sustaining Resilient Enterprises.

Bringing together an advisory group comprising experts in business resilience and risk management, the idea was to develop a training toolkit that would enable SMEs to apply the sort of business continuity planning used by bigger enterprises at an appropriate level for their operations. It would strengthen their resilience in the face of complex and compound natural, bio-environmental, techno-industrial, and socio-political hazards. Participating businesses develop a business resilience strategy tailored to their unique business context and environment. It involves group-based training and individual coaching and auditing services. It comprises six modules with 16 learning units taught via webinars or as eLearning modules.

The implementation model requires SURE trainers in local organizations (BDS providers, EBMOs, SME agencies etc.) to be trained by ITCILO and these in turn market and deliver training to small businesses. The target market are more advanced SMEs, with 5–10 employees and demonstrated business management skills.

In 2021, the programme was piloted in three countries – Iraq (through BDS providers in Kurdistan), South Africa (through a BDS and a Chamber of Commerce), and Trinidad and Tobago (through an EBMO).

Moving forward, the SURE programme is being adapted to the specific needs of enterprises involved in tourism, a sector that suffered badly in the pandemic and for which business resilience training is clear priority. Initial target markets will be South Africa and the Dominican Republic.

Staff from the Enterprises Department report that the programme, developed in close cooperation with ACT/EMP, is generating great interest from employers' organizations as a future value-added service for their members. It was seen as filling a gap in their existing service offerings for SMEs.

### Multinational enterprises

The ILO's work in promoting the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) contributed to its COVID-19 response, advancing the principles of Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) by MNEs during the crisis. The joint EU-ILO-UN Women project – "Promoting women's economic empowerment at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries" produced COVID-19 resources<sup>164</sup> related to RBC (for example, responsible purchasing practices in times of COVID-19, childcare in the COVID era). The ILO Helpdesk for Business also added guidance on Business and COVID-19 to its website.

164 <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/resources>



## Cooperatives and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

The Think.COOP training programme was adapted for online use,<sup>165</sup> resources on the crisis response were consolidated on an ILO webpage to aid constituents and SSE partners,<sup>166</sup> and webinars were conducted on the role of SSE in the recovery.<sup>167</sup> The UN Inter-Agency Taskforce on SSE, chaired by the ILO, also created a resource repository on COVID-19 responses.<sup>168</sup> An example of a recovery development project included the elaboration of a public policy proposal to create an incubator of cooperatives of self-employed female workers to facilitate the transition towards the formal economy in Bolivia.

## Social finance

The ILO's financial education programme has long relied on face-to-face training and technical support activities to its poor and vulnerable targets. Training of trainers switched to online delivery and some training, such as Making Microfinance Work course, was delivered online. To expand its audience during the pandemic and beyond, the Social Finance Programme also began podcasts<sup>169</sup> in May 2020 on financial inclusion, impact insurance and sustainable investing. It also used the pandemic to promote the transition from cash to digital payments, which improves the financial inclusion of vulnerable groups.<sup>170</sup>

## Global Programme on Employment Injury Insurance and Protection

The Global Programme on Employment Injury Insurance and Protection (GEIP) provides advisory and capacity-building services to enterprises and social security schemes to assess employment injury insurance systems. The programme is relevant to the ILO's pandemic response because infection by COVID-19, if contracted as a result of work, can be considered as work or employment injury. Access to health care and compensation, as set out in Conventions No. 102 and 121, become entitlements. Responses by GEIP included research into international practice on COVID-19 infection as a work-related injury.<sup>171</sup>

## Green Jobs and Just Transition

The Green Jobs Programme was established in 2008 to build commitment within ILO to the concept and to generate a range of international partnerships in the field. Its contribution to the COVID-19 response centres on promoting Green Jobs and the guidelines for a Just Transition as part of the recovery. The Call to Action reinforced this stressing the need to "leverage the opportunities of just digital and environmental transitions to advance decent work" (Para A.j) (see **Box 6**).

The HLE's staff survey suggested that perceptions of the relevance of the ILO's work in this policy area were relatively low with less than half rating this work as "relevant" or "very relevant" – the lowest rating of all listed policy areas. Its rating was also relatively low in response to the question "Do you think that the ILO is taking the necessary steps to design and implement recovery actions that are relative to the needs of constituents?" with 56 per cent answering "yes" and 29 per cent "no" (noting a high number of "don't know" responses). A meta-analysis of decent work results and ILO operations for 2020–21 also identified environmental sustainability as an area of overall weak performance, noting that while there were some elements in certain projects that promoted environmental sustainability, the majority "did not take this cross-cutting policy driver into account in design and implementation." In a development project example, re-purposing the project's activities to mitigate the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 implied compromising its green jobs' long-term agenda (Mozambique).

165 [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS\\_746363/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS_746363/lang--en/index.htm)

166 [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS\\_740411/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS_740411/lang--en/index.htm)

167 [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/events/WCMS\\_749256/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/events/WCMS_749256/lang--en/index.htm)

168 UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy, "SSE responses to COVID-19: information from the members and observers of the UNTFSSE".

169 ILO, "Social finance podcast".

170 ILO, "The ILO intensified its efforts to accelerate the transition from cash to digital wage payments", News, 17 December 2020.

171 ILO, State practice to address COVID-19 infection as a work-related injury, 2021.

## ► Box 6: Findings from evaluation of SIDA support to ILO work in the field of the green economy 2020–22

The Green Jobs function has received relatively little funding from internal ILO sources. However, it has benefitted greatly from a number of external partners. One such example is the SIDA-ILO partnership, which has worked to develop policy-oriented knowledge, recommendations and entry points for interventions on emerging issues in the just transition thematic or sectoral areas. According to its evaluation, during 2020–2021, the green economy component worked on:

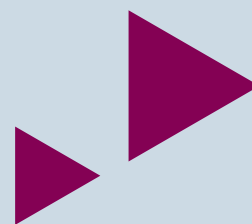
- Informality and climate change/environmental challenges – research and develop knowledge materials advancing formalisation and environmental sustainability.
- Just Transition financing – work to produce knowledge with the aim of mapping the current state of just transition financing, identifying gaps and needs for support and defining the ILO's added value and potential entry points for technical assistance.
- Market system development and environmental sustainability – development of two guides, drawing on experience of environmentally sensitive market system analysis in the United Republic of Tanzania, conducted under the previous phase of the SIDA-ILO partnership.
- Just Energy Transition – development of a guide and communication and training events to build understanding, strengthen commitments, and provide support to policy-making around transition in the context of energy system changes.
- In the African region – support to strengthen technical and delivery capacity in the region by contributing to a regional green jobs specialist based in Abidjan (eight months). This specialist supported national interventions funded by the SIDA-ILO Partnership Programme (SIPP) in Ghana and Tanzania and other interventions by mobilizing or leveraging complementary resources in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Madagascar and Algeria.

In terms of flexibility, the SIPP allowed interventions to adapt to constituents' needs by strategically identifying opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and by incorporating environmental sustainability as a transversal principle in developing the labour market, employment and labour relations.

The health, social, economic, and labour market crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic created a global need for countries to develop policies focused on economic recovery and growth. This created the opportunity to rethink the productive system and existing value chains, generating greater openness in constituents, especially government representatives, when contemplating alternatives to stimulate national economic and labour market development. The SIPP promoted this reflection and contributed to incorporating sustainability in a transversal way to generate a more resilient, qualified and sustainable industry.

Specifically, the SIPP supported identification and development of frameworks of green employment and qualifications, strengthening an approach focused on the needs of individuals and communities in contexts of productive transition and transformation, while considering the impact on employment of environmental policies. Examples include the development of the study on green recovery from COVID-19 in West Africa and the production of a document to analyse priorities for economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia.

Source: ILO, Final independent clustered evaluation of outcome-based funding support to ILO projects in the field of employment and skills, social dialogue and labour relations, protection for all at work, gender equality and equal opportunities, and just transition to the green economy for the period 2020–21. SECTION III: Case Study: GREEN ECONOMY AND JUST TRANSITION (outcomes 3 & 4). (Bangkok: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; 2022).



## Addressing gender equality

Actions addressing gender equity in this policy response area included:

- ▶ A joint ILO-UN Women project, “Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in care”, which supported governments, women’s organizations, development and social partners in implementing gender-sensitive policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis and ensuring an inclusive recovery.
- ▶ Policy tools on “How to assess fiscal stimulus packages from a gender equality perspective”; “Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery”; and “A guide to public investments in the care economy”.
- ▶ The “Rebuilding Better: Fostering Business Resilience Post-COVID-19” project, supported by JPMorgan Chase Foundation, which supports women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and adopt more sustainable and resilient business models.
- ▶ The joint EU-ILO-UN-Women “WE Empower” project which promoted women’s economic empowerment through responsible business conduct in G7 countries. Its Empowering Women at Work interventions and capacity development platform promoted a “gender-transformative policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis”.

In the case study countries, in **Argentina**, the project “Innovative solutions for an inclusive employment recovery and with gender perspective oriented to the transition to the formal economy in Argentina” aimed to support the ILO constituents in the design and implementation of employment recovery strategies that, among other characteristics, prioritize the sectors most affected by the crisis, including feminized sectors such as care (more than 95 per cent of workers in this sector are women). The Activate Women project in **Montenegro** aimed to support the reintegration of women who lost their job due to COVID-19 (see 274).

## ► Box 7: Case study – Green Jobs and Just Transition in the ILO's response to COVID-19

*"I agree strongly that at a time when the world is focusing its efforts on overcoming the multiple challenges of COVID-19, the ILO must not lose sight of the reality that climate change remains the defining global challenge of our time, and that we must act accordingly."* ILO Director-General<sup>172</sup>

Since early in the pandemic, the Green Jobs Unit has tried to raise awareness among ILO and its partners on the importance of interlinkages between humans, the environment and health. It is encouraging an integrated approach to COVID recovery, encompassing climate change, biodiversity, forest loss and health. If economies and societies are weakened by the pandemic, climate change could be worsened, with yet greater impacts. The 2021 ILO Users' Manual for Just Transition places it "as an integral part of the recovery process".<sup>173</sup>

Early in the pandemic, the ILO released a *Policy Brief*, "COVID-19 and the world of work: Jump-starting a green recovery with more and better jobs, healthy and resilient societies". It highlighted how existing ILO activities offered a platform for green recovery including through the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE),<sup>174</sup> the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative,<sup>175</sup> the EEIP (see Para.264), cleaner production training for SMEs via SCORE (see Para.290), as well as the ILO's work in promoting international labour standards. Some new activities (for example, in South Africa: Modelling an Inclusive Green Economy COVID-19 Recovery Programme for South Africa. Under the PAGE programme) related to a green COVID recovery were also initiated and online training modules for constituents were developed.

The ILO enhanced its profile in this area during COVID-19. In 2021, the International Renewable Energy Agency jointly published with the ILO its Renewable Energy Jobs Report which showed the sector's continued growth despite COVID. At COP 26, the COP Energy Transition Council, United Kingdom (on which the ILO is the only UN member) brought together fossil producers in Africa and other regions with potential funders to reduce this energy source. ILO also helped the United Kingdom to put together the Declaration on Just Transition signed at COP.

Despite ILO's high-profile advocacy efforts regarding Just Transition, performance on this dimension in its own projects has remained poor. A recent evaluation review<sup>176</sup> reported that "integration of just transition to environmental sustainability in ILO interventions evaluated in 2020 and 2021 was poor" and that "the majority of interventions did not take this cross-cutting policy driver into account in their design and implementation." Similarly, a recent MOPAN assessment<sup>177</sup> of ILO summarizes as one of the main areas needing improvement: "The ILO has yet to prioritise the 'green recovery' or serving the world of work by addressing the climate crisis." Resources – human and financial – are a barrier.

Recovery from the pandemic presents new opportunities for real action on Green Jobs and Just Transition. At the February 2022 Global Forum for a Human Centred Recovery, the ILO Director-General "urged the international community to close the gap between visionary statements of ambition and the collective action that's needed to address the social and economic fall-out of the COVID-19 pandemic".

172 ILO, Programme and Budget for the biennium 2022–23. The DG's response to the Governing Body's discussion (Geneva: 2021; p. 11).

173 ILO, User's manual to the ILO's Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. (Geneva: 2021; p. 14).

174 PAGE is a collaboration between five United Nations agencies and aims to share knowledge between UN agencies and country offices, funding partners and partner countries to accelerate progress towards inclusive, green and sustainable development.

175 ILO, "[Climate action for Jobs Initiative unites global efforts on the environment and decent work](#)".

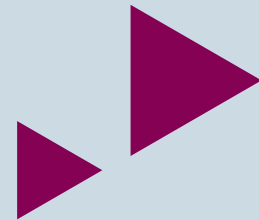
176 Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: Ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2020 and 2021 (partial). ILO Evaluation Office. 2021

177 MOPAN Assessment Overview, 2021, p. 5.

### ► Box 7: Case study – Green Jobs and Just Transition in the ILO's response to COVID-19 (cont'd.)

Such a gap is evident too in the area of Just Transition. The Just Transition Session of the Global Forum<sup>178</sup> concluded that the concept is severely challenged by the major disconnect between pledges, statements of intention and limited financial flows. Many stakeholders referred to previous substantial gaps between pledges and actual funds delivered for climate change purposes.

There is no shortage of ideas, calls for action and bold ambitions. However, there are far too few funds to allow all (or possibly even a fraction) of them to be implemented. It will, therefore, be essential to introduce an increased focus on results measurement and evaluation to track the degree of disconnect between stated intentions and outcomes delivered and to promote any necessary corrective measures.



Other country case study examples of work in inclusive economic growth and employment

#### Mexico

In Phase 1 of the project "Recovery of employment in the face of COVID-19 in Mexico with a just transition approach": Studies analysed possible strategies for reactivating employment post-pandemic economic in Mexico City; on market systems development and value chains in five green sectors in Mexico City; on the identification of labour demand and supply in green sectors and retraining and skills upgrading needs. A training course on Green Enterprises was also run for employers' organizations and a guide for greener production in cooperatives was produced.

#### South Africa

Under the Skills Initiative for Africa Project, ILO worked with Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) to conduct a rapid assessment of reskilling and upskilling needs arising from COVID-19. This identified a number of new priorities requiring responses from the skills system including OSH-related skills and the need for training centres for women, especially in rural areas.

#### Iraq

As part of COVID recovery through the development of new enterprises, ILO entered into partnership agreements and built the capacity of 35 organizations including the Iraqi central and private banks, NGOs and financial institutions. This included the creation of a pool of 30 SIYB and financial education trainers to support primarily Iraqi youth to start their businesses. ILO is also working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to accredit 50 of their staff to deliver SIYB to their beneficiaries before they access their Enterprise Development Fund. At a sectoral level, the ILO has supported farmers affected by COVID and the armed conflict with ISIS – 200 farmers (50 female) have been trained to enhance their production and 20 Department of Agriculture employees have been trained in coaching and mentoring of farmers. Financial support for another 41 female farmers to establish agribusiness projects are currently underway. The new SURE programme was also piloted in Iraq (see **Box 5**).

178 Global Forum for a Human Centred Recovery – Just Transition Session, 24 February 2022.

### Indonesia

ILO implemented the Indonesian element of the Global Surveys on Youth and Covid-19 and reskilling and upskilling needs in response to the COVID-19. ILO provided training for TVET instructors on adapting training material for online delivery and, in cooperation with the Australian Embassy, organized a series of webinars on the design and delivery of online TVET. In support of enterprises, a survey was conducted to assess the impact of the pandemic on enterprises and a report was published with key results and policy recommendations. Training was delivered to MSMEs on business continuity management and coping strategies and productivity improvement training videos, based on proven modules, were developed for SMEs. In collaboration with the Indonesian Retailers' Association (APRINDO), ILO provided online training courses on the creation of online shopping applications and e-commerce administration.

### Viet Nam

ILO Viet Nam's contribution to employment development strategies following the COVID-19 outbreak focused on support to the General Statistics Office (GSO) providing guidance on including a COVID-19 module within the Quarterly Labour Force Survey. This built the capacity of the GSO to produce up-to-date analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market from as early as May 2020 and throughout 2021. Informants from GSO highly valued ILO's support in building their capacity to produce high quality reports, that were validated by the ILO's Senior Economist. The reports contributed to raising awareness of the government and the Central Economic Commission on informal economy issues.

### Western Balkans

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ILO worked on the TVET dimension of a joint project with UNICEF, UNDP and UNESCO on a project called "Business Unusual: Reimagining Education for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19" to address deficiencies revealed during the pandemic related to access to online platforms, quality learning resources, teachers' capacities and provisions for leaving no-one behind. Another project used the ILO's STED methodology to address post-COVID skills deficits in the IT sector.

## ACTION PROMOTING PROTECTION OF ALL WORKERS

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The promotion of labour standards to protect workers' rights was crucial and ILO made significant contributions to their reinforcement, playing a facilitating role in social dialogue and coordinating action promoting adherence to international labour standards.
- ▶ ILO strongly supported constituents' OSH work during the pandemic, culminating in OSH's confirmation as one of the FPRW at the 2022 ILC. ILO's established authority in OSH was reinforced among stakeholders and UN agencies, and the ILO facilitated coordination between ministries of labour and health on infectious disease control measures.
- ▶ The flagship programmes, Better Work and Safety and Health for All – through its Vision Zero Fund subprogramme, successfully pivoted to guide COVID-19 workplace safety and mitigation measures, reaching the garment, agriculture, construction and other sectors.
- ▶ The ILO contributed to global estimate reports on both child labour and forced labour, warning of a reversal of progress on child labour within already vulnerable populations and called for universal social protection to help end child labour. Ongoing child labour programmes provided immediate support to affected communities.
- ▶ Assessments of the impact of COVID-19 on informal economy workers were conducted in 15 countries, and guidance was disseminated on reaching informal workers with COVID-19 safety measures. ILO capitalized on the elevated attention to the issue to accelerate national policy action on formalization.
- ▶ ILO re-focused its migrant worker support services to increase safety and human rights protection at destination and strengthened reintegration supports, notably through its programmes in Asia and the Pacific.
- ▶ ILO documented the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on women and vulnerable groups (for example, research and advocacy briefs on the care economy, violence and harassment and the inclusion of diverse groups in COVID-19 mitigation). However, resources devoted to mitigating the pandemic's impacts on women workers and vulnerable groups at country level were mainly delivered through existing programmes, such as OSH and labour standards compliance projects, rather than new initiatives.

### Context

The onset of the pandemic brought a host of issues associated with the protection of workers around the world, including pre-existing gaps in protection of some groups of workers that came into sharper relief. The impacts of COVID-19 also called for increased vigilance on compliance with ILO's decent work compass, the international labour standards – due to sudden lockdowns, lay-offs, and adverse impacts on working hours and wages around the world. As workplaces are often the site of transmission of the virus, with varying risk factors, measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace became the most pressing issue for many countries. Constituents in many countries sought guidance on how to facilitate a safe return to work, notably in high-risk sectors such as manufacturing, construction, transport, and agriculture. **Table 2** describes some of the key global protection issues and trends.

From a protection as well as an employment perspective, the crisis was experienced differently by sectors and their workforces, differentiating sectors with a high demand and risk exposure, including essential workers in health, transport, and care work, and those with decreased demand, such as tourism, retail and hospitality, where leave and termination conditions were critical concerns.<sup>179</sup>

**TABLE 2: PROTECTION IN THE WORKPLACE AND EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC – GLOBAL ISSUES AND TRENDS**

Issue	Global effects and trends
International labour standards	Workers' rights to safe and decent work conditions as defined in ILS were threatened in diverse ways by the crisis – including wage protection, working hours, health and safety, non-discrimination. The Committee of Experts report of 2020 highlighted numerous concerns regarding ILS contravention, especially the Maritime Labour Convention and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 206). <sup>180</sup>
Child labour and other Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work	Globally, child labour increased by million in absolute terms, while the rate remained the same, but the ILO-UNICEF global survey predicted that the recent progress in eliminating child labour could be reversed by the poverty impacts of the pandemic. <sup>181</sup>
Occupational safety and health	Countries, sectors, and enterprises needed urgent guidance on health systems and assessment of COVID-19 risk and prevention and mitigation measures in workplaces. Mitigation measures were especially needed to protect the health and safety of key and frontline workers, including in the health care, transport and waste collection sectors.
Wages and working conditions	Protection of workers' income during the pandemic became critical, increasing requests for minimum wage setting. <sup>182</sup>
Informal economy workers and other vulnerable groups	The pandemic hit certain categories of workers disproportionately, especially those in the informal economy, home workers and domestic workers, who were often excluded from OSH protection as well as social security measures. <sup>183</sup>
Emerging forms of work	High demand from countries for guidance on regulating teleworking conditions, and those of delivery platform workers, which proliferated during the pandemic. <sup>184</sup>
Migrant workers	COVID-19 exposed the lack of protection of migrant workers, revealing various forms of exploitation, including non-payment of wages and lack of employer mobility <sup>185</sup> as hundreds of thousands of workers, particularly from Africa and Asia lost their jobs, were stranded in destination countries or were suddenly sent home. <sup>186</sup>
Women, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities	Women workers were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with the double burden of work and family care responsibilities. The vulnerabilities of diverse disadvantaged groups including indigenous communities, people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS were exacerbated. <sup>187</sup>

179 ILO, [Sectoral Policy Department 2020–2021 highlights](#) (Geneva: 2022).

180 ILO, CEACR. General Observation adopted by the CEACR at its 91st Session (Nov–Dec 2020).

181 GB.344/PFA/1 (Rev.1)

182 GB. 344/PFA/1 (Rev.1)

183 ILO, [Working from home: From invisibility to decent work](#). January 2021; ILO, [Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#), 2021, pp. 230–236.

184 ILO, [Teleworking during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond. A Practical Guide](#), 2020.

185 ILO staff interviews; GB.344/PFA/1 (Rev.1)

186 Katherine Jones, Sanushka Mudaliar and Nicola Piper, [Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment](#) (Geneva: ILO; 2021).

187 ILO, [“The COVID-19 response. Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work”](#), Policy Brief, May 2020.



## ILO Action

### OVERVIEW

The action areas defined in the Call to Action and in the initial four-pillar framework aimed to protect workers' **fundamental rights, health and safety, and working conditions** affected by COVID-19, and build back better towards a more inclusive world of work. The *Call to Action*, put a spotlight on the transformative strategies required towards inclusion of vulnerable groups in the recovery. The Protection of Workers narrative in the *Call to Action* aligns with the 2020–2021 P&B outcomes and output areas of Outcome 7 (Adequate and effective protection at work for all), Outcome 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work), and Outcome 2 (International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision).<sup>188</sup>

The following sections discuss the actions to address the myriad labour protection issues brought with the pandemic, including the application of international labour standards, preventing the escalation of child labour and forced labour, promoting OSH, reaching vulnerable groups, regulating the conditions of emerging forms of work, and providing protection against gender-based violence and discrimination. The discussion parallels the priorities highlighted in the Call to Action, and links with P&B outcomes 7, 2 and 6 with respect to protection issues.<sup>189</sup>

According to the P&B Implementation Report 2020–2021, “countries’ actions and needs focused on the sectors and supply chains that were either hardest hit by the pandemic or became essential in the crisis, and the ILO therefore increased its guidance and cooperation to provide multidimensional supports in key sectors such as hospitality, tourism, transport, health, education, care, manufacturing, and construction”.<sup>190</sup>

Overall, the HLE staff survey showed that effectiveness ratings of “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory” were highest for the Protection of Workers policy domain, at 60 per cent of responses. This perception was also borne out by ILO P&B results for the biennium, where results exceeded targets for OSH policies, protection of informal workers and protection of migrant workers. In addition, the HLE analysis of COVID-19 reporting in CPO monitoring shows that Outcome 7 accounted for 21 per cent of COVID-19 reports, the highest among all outcomes.

### Reinforcing international labour standards

Trends in ratifications of international standards were affected by the pandemic according to the P&B 2020–2021 report on Outcome 2. Ratifications dropped in 2020 but increased significantly in 2021 once the backlog was addressed. The increased relevance of OSH to the COVID-19 response led to increased country ratifications of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and there was also a high number of ratifications of the recently adopted Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Domestic Workers’ Convention, 2011 (No. 189).<sup>191</sup> In the CPO monitoring, few entries reported COVID-19 related responses on labour standards at the country level, but this may reflect the long term nature of ongoing ratification efforts.

With the onset of the crisis, the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) rapidly received many requests from Member States regarding the application of international labour standards to the new circumstances. For example, there were many questions related to teleworking and the application of ILS. In response, NORMES developed a set of FAQs on ILO Standards and COVID-19 to equip the Member States and constituents, including anticipating questions beyond those that were received.<sup>192</sup> The FAQs included a wide scope of 46 issues raised by the pandemic, and provide relevant ILS guidance. The key message was that the standards

<sup>188</sup> The international labour standards provide the normative foundation for the full spectrum of decent work, while the Call to Action highlighted COVID-19 action on ILS under the protection policy theme.

<sup>189</sup> Our analysis adds the sectoral, multi-dimensional response of the ILO, which is not fully captured in the P&B structure.

<sup>190</sup> GB 344/PFA/1 Rev.1) p. 14.

<sup>191</sup> GB 344/PFA/1 Rev.1) p. 14.

<sup>192</sup> ILO. [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) – Version 3.0, FAQ](#) (Geneva: 13 April 2021).

prevail despite the conditions created. Further, the document advises that force majeure could be claimed by parties as grounds to disregard ILS in rare circumstances, where there was a physical impossibility to act otherwise. The FAQ document has been downloaded 37,563 times according to the evaluation analysis; and according to NORMES staff, various countries used the FAQs extensively.

ILO's NORMES department acts as secretariat to the infrastructure for the supervisory system of the ILS, including the regular scrutiny of compliance and response to complaints by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Regulations (CEACR).<sup>193</sup> The secretariat guided the focus of the Committee of Experts to ensure the impact of COVID-19 on labour standards was captured in the annual reporting during the two years. The CEACR devoted attention to the impact of COVID-19 in its general survey report of 2020, and in the 2021 addendum to the report.<sup>194</sup> This report highlighted several critical concerns in the wake of COVID-19, including working time, informal economy, discrimination, and compliance in the maritime sector, described in detail below.

Social dialogue is a cornerstone of international labour standards, most of which refer to the involvement of employers' and workers' representatives in shaping and implementing policies for the world of work.<sup>195</sup> The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), is especially relevant, calling for all crisis response measures to be developed through gender-inclusive social dialogue, recognizing the vital role of employers' organizations in this respect. The two main OSH standards – Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), both call for consultations with representative organizations of employers and workers. ILO's support to social dialogue in developing OSH and other measures is discussed below regarding the maritime sector, OSH interventions in general and other sectoral interventions.

As extensively documented, maritime workers' rights as defined in international labour and maritime standards were severely threatened by the pandemic. The ILO's interventions to reinforce the standards, in collaboration with the tripartite partners and UN agencies, had a significant impact on immediate and longer-term protection of seafarers. **Box 8** describes how the ILO contributed to building consensus and coordinating urgent action in the maritime sector.

One of the lessons arising from the response to the maritime workers' situation is the critical relevance of international labour standards in a crisis response. NORMES staff observe that internally, as well as from some government constituents, they encountered the view that in a crisis context, strict vigilance of international labour standards can wait until the emergency issues have been addressed. This view was echoed in the Synthesis Review of evaluations during the period – one constituent observed that “at the moment we have bigger fish to fry”. Yet, as the workers' fundamental rights were threatened on many fronts, it is evident that in times of crisis the ILO needs to insist on adherence to ILS. Further, the role and capacity of the ILO to take direct action in a crisis was highlighted as raising ILO's institutional reputation among the social partners.

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193 The supervisory system comprises regular scrutiny and complaints-based inquiry responding to complaints brought by the social partners/constituents.

194 ILO. Application of International Labour Standards 2021. Addendum to the 2020 Report of the CEACR. International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021. Report III/Addendum (Part A).

195 ILO Standards and COVID-19, V. 3.0, FAQ. 13 April 2021.

## ► Box 8: Case study – support to maritime workers

### Background

The maritime industry was unprepared for the impact of COVID-19, which was more global in its reach than other contagious disease outbreaks (Ebola, Avian Flu, SARS). COVID-19 border closures and travel restrictions hindered the industry's ability to repatriate seafarers following their tours of duty, and to effect crew changes in line with the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). The ongoing challenge was that countries gave precedence to public health regulations over their obligations under the Convention. As documented by the ILO and the social partners, at the height of the pandemic, over 400,000 seafarers were stranded on board ships, serving beyond their contracts for up to 17 consecutive months as governments refused to prioritize them for vaccination, immigration and travel purposes, denied disembarkation rights, and access to urgent medical treatment.<sup>196,197</sup>

### ILO's policy and coordination response

The ILO's response to the needs of seafarers illustrates the effective use of its tripartite and UN convening powers, the supervisory mechanisms of the Maritime Labour Convention (2006)<sup>198</sup>, international labour standards, and the extraordinary initiatives of officers of NORMES and SECTOR. The key ILO actors were the NORMES Department, and particularly its Maritime Unit, and the Transport and Maritime Unit in SECTOR, who worked closely together.

Interviewed stakeholders of the Special Tripartite Committee for the Migrant Labour Convention (STC-MLC) were unanimously impressed with how quickly and flexibly the ILO responded to the sudden needs, through the adaptation of the ILS supervisory mechanisms, convening consultative processes, and direct international facilitation efforts at the request of the social partners.<sup>199</sup>

**"It was quite amazing to see how ILO quickly adapted to this completely unforeseen situation ... Typically we meet among the STC officers once a year at best, we began meeting weekly, and were in almost daily contact." (Shipowners representative.)**

As an early response, the ILO issued an **Information Note** responding to Member States' requests for advice on how to apply the MLC, initially in February 2020, updated several times as the situation evolved.<sup>200</sup> This became a chief reference for the industry, cited by multiple UN documents and the social partners (Web download analysis shows 14,416 downloads). As well as documentary guidance, given the urgency of the situation, the ILO responded to social partners' requests to intervene via the *informal opinion mechanism* (a letter written by the Director of ILS department to a state/partner), but also through the **Urgent Intervention** mechanism, issued by the ILO Director-General.

The seafarers' situation was the focus of a general survey of the Committee of Experts (CEACR) in 2020 which issued a **General Observation** in its December 2020 session, expressing in strong terms that Member States had contravened their obligations in denying seafarers their rights to access medical attention and disembarkation rights.<sup>201</sup> It was welcomed by the industry and widely quoted in the press.

**Coordinated tripartite and UN action.** When the situation of seafarers began to emerge in early 2020, ILO quickly convened meetings of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC) officers, first on

196 Hamburg School of Business Administration. The Perfect Storm: The Impact of COVID-19 on Shipping, Seafarers and Maritime Labour Markets. International Chamber of Shipping, April 2022.

197 ILO Standards and COVID-19, Version 3.0, FAQ. 13 April 2021.

198 The Maritime Labour Convention (2006) represents the consolidation of a body of pre-existing maritime regulatory instruments (effective 2013).

199 Evaluation interviews with STC-MLC officers from shipowners, seafarers' organizations, government and the IMO.

200 ILO, [Information note on maritime labour issues and coronavirus \(COVID-19\), Revised version 3.0](#). (Geneva: NORMES/SECTOR, 2021).

201 ILO CEACR, General observation adopted by the CEACR at its 91st session (November–December 2020).

### ► Box 8: Case study – support to maritime workers (cont'd.)

a weekly basis, to discuss the issues and find solutions. The meetings continued for almost two years. The STC issued several joint statements and resolutions in support of seafarers' rights and compliance with the MLC and International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions. The social partners' dialogue throughout this process was noted as exceptional by all informants. According to the industry and UN partners interviewed, the existing mature relationship of the shipowners and seafarers trade unions was strengthened more than ever with ILO facilitation. The social partners spoke with one voice on several proposed amendments of the MLC arising from the COVID-19 crisis, subsequently approved at the May 2022 ILC.

The STC meetings were soon expanded to include the IMO, the lead international agency in maritime safety regulation. The ILO's relationship with the IMO was strengthened significantly through this process according to the representatives. ILO also engaged WHO in the consultative process. The coordinated strategy brought the plight of seafarers to the attention of the UN Secretary-General who placed the issue on the UN Secretary-General's Executive Committee agenda in 2020. The outcomes included **Resolutions** adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2020,<sup>202</sup> the ILO Governing Body, and **multiple joint UN and Global Compact statements** urging Member States to designate seafarers as key workers to permit crew changes and address the humanitarian crisis faced by the shipping sector.<sup>203</sup> Eventually many countries recognized seafarers as key workers, though not all countries have done so.

A joint UN agenda has been established to address the ongoing issues, including the recent formation of two UN working groups: the **Joint action group to review the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on transport workers and the global supply chain (JAG-TSC)**, convened by ILO and WHO in December 2021, and the **Ad-hoc UN inter-agency Task Force on the impact of COVID-19 on seafarers** – established by the UN Secretary-General's Executive Committee on 14 January 2022. Social partner representatives indicated they are awaiting the deliberations of the latter group.

Numerous informants highlighted the ILO's direct role in support of the social partners in the repatriation of **Kiribati seafarers**, who were stranded in ports around the world, when the country closed its borders to prevent COVID-19.<sup>204</sup> As highlighted by a social partner: "the ILO really took charge and pressed the Kiribati government... They would not be home until today without the ILO. After months and dozens of meetings, the combined efforts managed to bring all of these 400 seafarers home, the last ones returning in May 2022".<sup>205</sup>

#### Key outcomes

- Improved response of Member States allowing crew change, shore leave and seafarer repatriation rights.
- While the MLC contained protective provisions that stood up to the COVID-19 crisis, the ILC 2022 amendments provide improved protection in crisis and pandemic situations, including repatriation (Standard A 2.5.1), access to internet communications (Regulation 3.1), medical care on board and ashore (Standard A 4.1), investigation and registration of deaths at sea (Standard A4.3).<sup>206</sup>
- ILO's reputation among the social partners and the UN agencies was enhanced, as was the trust of social partners in UN system.

202 See United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/17 on international cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of COVID-19, 1 December 2020.

203 Joint statement by ILO, UNCTAD, IOM, FAO, OHCHR, ICAO, WHO, UN Global Compact and IMO, September 2020.

204 Seafaring makes a key contribution to the economy of the Pacific island state of Kiribati, with a training school established by the German shipping industry.

205 Safety4Sea, "[Over 600 i-Kiribati trapped seafarers repatriated 2 years after the beginning of the pandemic](#)", editorial, 10 May 2022.

206 STMLC/Part11/2022. Amendments to the MLC document.

## Preventing child labour and forced labour

Among the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, most results reported during the biennium were focused on strategies and action plans on child labour. Results for P&B Output 7.1 (Capacity on fundamental principles and rights at work) were under-target for the biennium for all indicators, but especially the indicator for countries with integrated programmes on FPRW (Indicator 7.1.1). The HLE analysis of COVID-19 reports against CPO reporting showed that only nine out of 79 entries for Outcome 7 were associated with this output, suggesting relatively low perceptions of COVID-19-specific activities among rapporteurs.

From a variety of ILO, UN and constituent perspectives, there is an emerging consensus that progress in ending child labour has likely been reversed by the pandemic, as deteriorating economic conditions may have forced more families to engage their children in work. This concern was noted by the CEACR in 2020 and echoed in the 5th Global Conference on Child Labour in May 2022 with the Durban Call to Action to End Child Labour.<sup>207</sup> Over the biennium, the ILO was able to maintain momentum on the global alliance towards the achievement of the SDG target 8.7 on child labour, where ILO as secretariat to SDG Alliance 8.7 saw the number of Pathfinder countries increase from 19 to 25.

In 2020, ILO and UNICEF collaborated to produce the Global Estimates on Child Labour, with data collected until the start of 2020.<sup>208</sup> Given that data for the COVID-19 period was not included, an update is in progress with data from 2021. The global estimates show a downward trend in absolute and percentage terms in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, while Africa has seen a continuous rise since 2012. In the chapter devoted to the impact of COVID-19, the report warns that poverty-driven child labour could rise dramatically by 2022 if social protection measures for vulnerable families and children are not put in place.

In May 2020, the IPEC+ Flagship Programme<sup>209</sup> provided an initial framework for responding to the pandemic including leveraging the field presence, mobilizing global and regional networks, producing knowledge and data, investing in gender-responsive monitoring and compliance solutions, building resilience through social dialogue, re-purposing and innovating our operations. The document indicated the intention to re-purpose US\$21 million of existing development cooperation funding towards the COVID-19 response. As part of this effort the IPEC+ programme initiated a series of child labour situation assessments in 15 countries. However, the evaluation was not able to identify a review of the actual effort over the past two years.

The synthesis review of evaluations of child labour projects cited several projects in which progress in the elimination of child labour had been threatened by the pandemic. An evaluation focusing on the decent work deficits in the tobacco sector in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, noted how school closures during the pandemic had a negative effect on eliminating child labour.

The HLE identified some COVID-19 responses within child labour programmes, though not significant course changes or re-purposing of funds. The HLE country case studies in Argentina and Viet Nam for example, found that ILO's child labour prevention and elimination projects made some small-scale efforts to adjust strategies to respond to the impact of the pandemic.

207 ILO, Press release on "[Global Child Labour Conference agrees Durban Call to Action to end child labour](#)", 20 May 2022. The ILO is responsible for organizing the global conference.

208 ILO and UNICEF. "[Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward](#)", 2021.

209 ILO, IPEC+ Flagship Programme is the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour.

In **Viet Nam**, the ENHANCE child labour prevention capacity-building project re-purposed some of their funds to support their community beneficiaries with material assistance in the form of PPE and education supplies; following the recommendations of the final evaluation in 2021.<sup>210</sup> This mainly revolved around COVID-19 OSH awareness and additional school supplies rather than a course-change, given the advanced stage of the project. According to project staff the project had not explored with its government partners in the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs whether there was any change in child labour during the period that might be attributed to the impact of COVID-19.

In **Argentina**, the “Offside” project on eliminating child labour in agriculture included COVID-19 prevention awareness in its child labour interventions with agricultural workers. Notably, it also took a livelihood sustainability approach to mitigate child labour among households in the food production sector in the wake of the pandemic. This involved an inter-agency and institutional coordination body, a campaign to promote health, safety and decent work conditions in the Buenos Aires Central Market, and a “decent work observatory” initiated in the market to promote fundamental rights.<sup>211</sup>

Child labour is a traditional part of Iraqi culture, contributing to its persistence in the country. ILO enabled communities in **Iraq** to address child labour during the COVID-19 recovery era by conducting a series of awareness-raising campaigns to counter child labour. The ILO partners organized field visits to 300 business units, raising their awareness on child labour and conducted trainings for teachers, government employees, NGO representatives, police officers and 50 religious leaders, who transmitted the message during Friday prayer in the mosques.

The recent Durban Call to Action to Eliminate Child labour focused increased attention on social protection to address child labour, suggesting that the major work is yet to come in shifting strategies to address the causes of child labour that were exacerbated by the pandemic.

### Occupational safety and health measures

As OSH measures became an urgent priority in the COVID-19 response everywhere, OSH guidance and mitigation measures rose to the top of ILO's response agenda. This culminated in the landmark decision made at the ILC 2022 to recognize OSH as a fundamental principle of decent work, as advocated since the Centenary Declaration.<sup>212</sup> **Reviewing the body of ILO's response, most of the action has concentrated on immediate crisis response to safety in the workplace, while by mid-2021, the guidance narrative shifted to crisis resilient systems.**

The growth in demand from Member States and level of effort on OSH responses to COVID-19 is reflected in P&B reporting, which saw responses surpass the results targets for Output 7.2 (contributed mainly through Indicator 7.2.1– Member states with OSH policies or programmes – 32 compared with the target of 26). The analysis of COVID-19 reports in CPO monitoring aligned with the global attention to OSH issues, in which Output 7.2 accounted for 28 of 79 COVID-19 entries (35 per cent).

210 United States Department of Labor, *Final Performance Evaluation. Technical Support for Enhancing National Capacity to Prevent and Reduce Child Labour in Vietnam*, 2021.

211 Argentina project: OFFSIDE Marking the field. Improve the capacity of labor and agricultural actors to address child labor in agricultural areas of Argentina.

212 ILO, “[International Labour Conference adds safety and health to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#)”, Press Release, 10 June 2022.

Globally, ILO's early response was to develop guidance on preventive measures in the workplace, including social distancing guidance and risk assessment measures. It collaborated with WHO on developing guidelines, as the lead UN agency on public health. LABADMIN/OSH staff noted that it took some time to develop agreement on guidance policies between the ILO and WHO, where WHO's guidance was initially less stringent based on initial evidence, while ILO responded to the requests of constituents. Other ILO staff were of the view that ILO overstepped its technical mandate in determining matters of physical distancing that differed from those of WHO. Nevertheless, the collaboration between ILO and WHO grew as further guidelines were jointly developed.

As pointed out by a senior ILO officer, the highest priority was to address the protection and health risks of "people who have to go to work" such as essential workers and those in high-risk sectors – health workers, care workers, transport workers and waste collectors. The ILO produced OSH guidance documents across all these areas, but its direct support interventions did not necessarily prioritize the frontline groups, being shaped as they were by existing project opportunities and donor interests.

Both LABADMIN/OSH and SECTOR produced a multitude of guidance documents<sup>213</sup> and action checklists on OSH and COVID-19 mitigation in specific sectors, some of which were produced jointly.<sup>214</sup> The implementation report of the SECTORAL policies department on highlights of the biennium notes 19 sectoral COVID-19 briefs developed through tripartite engagement, documenting the impacts on diverse sectors and actions taken by constituents, as well as ILO tools and responses at the sectoral level for diverse sectors including agriculture, transport, care workers, health and emergency services.<sup>215</sup> Some of these briefs were among the highest downloaded publications of the ILO. Some of these policies and guidelines were adapted and applied by ILO development cooperation interventions in the field. Others were developed in the field and adapted for global application, such as the guide for COVID-19 mitigation in agriculture, originally developed in Mexico.

By 2021, the ILO's policy guidance was more oriented towards establishing public health systems that are resilient to crisis. Marking the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2021, ILO published a guide on health system response, *Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises*, emphasizing the importance of setting up solid OSH systems and institutional frameworks and consolidating a body of ILO and other agency OSH guidance available to date.<sup>216</sup>

At the field level, ILO's efforts supported the development of national OSH risk assessment systems in coping with the pandemic,<sup>217</sup> and delivering tailored support to constituents and beneficiaries in specific sectors, primarily through development cooperation projects. ILO staff observed that one of the early challenges was the mismatch between the advice health ministries and labour ministries were giving on transmission prevention, which was a critical obstacle to crisis management. The ILO worked to bridge this gap and several HLE country case studies demonstrate ILO's role in strengthening the capacity of labour ministries on COVID-19 OSH interventions, and in helping to build the relationship between ministries of labour and ministries of health.

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213 ILO, "A safe and healthy return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic", Policy Brief. May 2020.

214 ILO, Sectoral Policies Department highlights, 2020–2021 (Geneva: 2021).

215 The sectoral briefs are not restricted to OSH issues and responses. Some of the cross-policy sectoral responses are discussed in the following section addressing sectoral approaches protecting teleworking and platform workers.

216 ILO, "[World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2021](#)", Event, 28 April 2021.

217 ILO, [Protecting workers: OSH in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Rapid needs assessment and response plans: Preparation guidelines for country level interventions](#) (Geneva: 17 April 2021).

In **Viet Nam**, for example, ILO joined WHO in supporting the Health and Environment Management Agency under the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) to develop a guideline on *COVID-19 risk assessment for enterprises and dormitories* primarily aimed at the industrial sector. ILO Viet Nam, through its Better Work programme, assisted the Health and Environment Management Agency to train Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry members in applying the risk assessment tool across various industry sectors. An informant from MOLISA observed that this was the first time that MOLISA and HEMA has collaborated.

ILO also collaborated with WHO in **Madagascar** to facilitate closer engagement between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour to urgently respond to the pandemic in implementing OSH measures. Through ILO's Vision Zero Fund (VZF) leadership, the institutional capacity and position of the Ministry of Labour's OSH policy was significantly strengthened, including through training within the labour inspectorate in the application of the policy on inspection, and the revision of the Labour Code to update OSH articles.<sup>218</sup>

In **Madagascar**, through the VZF project, the ILO made a key contribution to strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Labour's OSH policy on COVID-19, together with labour inspectorate training on the application of the policy. The ILO and WHO collaborated to facilitate the relationship between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour on OSH guidance, resulting in increased relevance of the Ministry of Labour on these issues. The ILO built the capacity of the social partners on the OSH COVID-19 response by training 406 workers' representatives from the Madagascar Workers' Conference (CTM). It also supported the Grouping of Free Enterprises and Partners (GEFP) in coordinating the implementation of COVID-19 OSH measures in member companies together with labour administration. Informants said that the COVID-19 context accelerated the revision of the Labour Code with ILO's support and the inclusion of an OSH chapter.

In **Iraq**, COVID-19 accelerated the need for an OSH policy and a labour inspection policy. ILO utilized a tripartite strategy, engaging the representatives of employers and workers in developing both labour inspection regulations and OSH policy, which are in a final draft version, waiting for the approval of the new Iraqi cabinet.

A large part of the **ILO's support to COVID-19 OSH interventions in the field was carried out sectorally, for example**, in garments and textiles, agriculture, and construction. Two of the ILO's flagship programmes, **the Safety and Health for All** programme and Better Work were especially proactive in adapting and re-purposing to address OSH in specific supply chains.

In the **garment sector**, the **Better Work global flagship programme** delivered wide-ranging COVID-19 OSH messaging and built social partner capacity on OSH across 12 countries. Better Work also took a lead role in the multilateral *Global Call to action to protect workers in the garment sector*, with the goal of protecting workers from the ravages of the pandemic on their jobs and working conditions (see Box 9).

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218 HLE Madagascar case study.

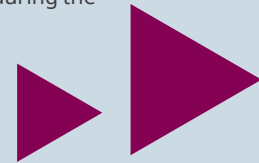


### ► Box 9: Better Work OSH interventions in the garment sector

ILO's flagship programme, Better Work is a partnership between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group. It seeks to improve working conditions in the garment industry and make the sector more competitive. Based on HLE interviews in Indonesia, and Viet Nam, as well as evaluations of Better Work programmes in countries and regions during the period, the programme was highly proactive in responding to the impacts of COVID-19, not only in adapting and shifting to remote service delivery, but in producing wide-ranging COVID-19 safety guidance and addressing broader working conditions, such as wages, hours of work, leave, and retrenchment conditions.<sup>219</sup> Better Work's adaptations were based on needs assessments and engagement with employers and workers at enterprise and national sectoral levels. One of Better Work's global initiatives was to set up a COVID-19 portal to provide updates and advice to its industry partners in employers' and workers' organizations.<sup>220</sup>

In **Viet Nam**, Better Work worked with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) to develop, pilot and disseminate a new app called "GOPY" (which in Vietnamese means to "share ideas"), to spread COVID safety messaging targeting the workforce as well as employers. This is gradually being adopted and used by ILO constituents and workers. The VZF COVID-19 BMZ-funded project also contributed to the dissemination of the app and other training activities on enterprise level COVID-risk assessments in the garment and other sectors.

**Better Work Indonesia** developed online stress management training to create a positive working and living environment for workers and management of the garment industry during the COVID-19 outbreak.



The **VZF** is a G7 initiative, coordinated by the ILO under the **Safety and Health for All** flagship programme, with active country-level and regional projects focusing on garments and textiles, agriculture, and construction supply chains in **Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mexico, Myanmar and Viet Nam**. The project's first response to the COVID-19 outbreak was to carry out a rapid assessment of each country's needs and, based on these, to meet donors and country-level authorities to adjust project plans.

VZF delivered COVID-19 OSH adaptations both through "classic" VZF projects and through a new garment sector COVID-19 response project implemented jointly by SOCPRO and LABADMIN/OSH in collaboration with Better Work. This project was implemented in seven countries – **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Myanmar and Viet Nam**.<sup>221</sup> This project arose from donor interest in providing further support to the garment sector through both OSH interventions and cash transfers. Supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the project was implemented jointly by ILO Social Protection Department (SOCPRO) and VZF (LABADMIN/OSH). In the early stages of the pandemic, BMZ approached the VZF to take up this project. The OSH component was delivered by Better Work in the countries where Better Work was already on the ground (the cash transfer component is discussed under the **social protection policy section: 4.5**). The OSH component and the cash transfer components were delivered independently. The HLE team interviewed project coordinating staff and partner representatives in **Indonesia, Madagascar and Viet Nam**, and also reviewed the interim and final evaluations of the project. One of the final evaluation findings was that while ILO's contribution

219 ILO, ILO Cluster Evaluation of the RMGP in Bangladesh, 2020; Ruth Bowen, [Independent interim evaluation of Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh](#) (Washington DC: US Department of Labor; 2021).

220 BW COVID-19 portal: <https://betterwork.org/1-better-work-response-to-covid19/>

221 GLO/20/20/MUL. Protecting garment sector workers: Occupational safety and health and income support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

to improving COVID-19 safety as well as wages and working conditions in the garment sector is undeniable, some countries felt that the garment sector already had enough attention.

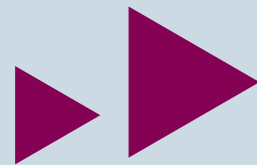
**In agriculture**, the VZF made notable achievements in protecting workers from COVID-19 transmission, both by re-purposing its existing programmes on coffee and other food supply chains, and through new Covid-19 response funding. **Box 10** provides an insight into the COVID-19 interventions in the coffee sector.

### ► **BOX 10: COVID-19 mitigation in the coffee supply chain: Mexico and Viet Nam**

According to the evaluation interviews, the Vision Zero Fund's projects promoting OSH in the coffee sector value chain in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Southeast Asia implemented timely and practical adaptations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>222</sup> While infection waves varied globally, coffee harvesters and processors, often working in close proximity, faced high transmission risks, and workers in remote and indigenous communities have less access to traditional messaging.

In Mexico, the coffee project quickly assessed the needs for COVID-19 prevention awareness in the context of the outbreak early in 2020. The project was instrumental in developing the **Practical Guide for Mitigating and Preventing COVID-19 in Agriculture**, which was adapted and applied in other parts of Latin America and internationally.<sup>223</sup> The project also produced a series of COVID-19 safety protocols and videos, distributed in partnership with **women's coffee growing cooperatives**, larger coffee consortiums and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The interactive nature of the campaign was based on the adaptation of ILO's traditional WIND and WISE methodologies.<sup>224</sup> The protocols for coffee were successfully expanded to other crops – peppers and tomatoes. Constituent interviewees highly valued the attractive nature of the campaign materials.

Viet Nam's OSH intervention in the coffee supply chain, through the German funded project, "Improving Safety and Health in cooperation with the private and public sector in the coffee supply chain in Vietnam) partnered with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Global Coffee Platform in Viet Nam to integrate preventive COVID-19 awareness in OSH training. This COVID integration into the training materials included both specific references to COVID-19 prevention measures, and also prevention of communicable diseases in general. One of the challenges noted was that the government regulations on distancing and other precautions were constantly evolving during the pandemic, therefore it was difficult to make very specific guidelines. The project was able to reach both larger producers and community-based cooperatives through its partnerships. Viet Nam drew on the guidance materials from Mexico, while benefiting from the later peak of infections in the country. The Global Coffee Platform representatives found the hybrid training approach, including online learning and field testing of the tools engaging, and sees wider application by its members world-wide for the prevention of communicable diseases in the coffee sector beyond COVID-19.



222 RLA/08/EUR. Safety and health in the global coffee value chain, with emphasis on Latin America – VZF.

223 ILO-VZF, [Practical guide for the mitigation and prevention of COVID-19 in agriculture, Version 1.0](#) (Geneva: April 2020).

224 WIND – Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development and WISE – Work Improvement in Small Enterprises.

**As far as reaching MSMEs with COVID-19 guidance** is concerned, ILO provided significant support to enterprise-level OSH protection among MSMEs, including those in the informal economy. The evaluation noted examples in countries across South Asia where ILO contributed significant efforts to **advising enterprises and constituents** on a safe return to work. In **India**, for example, ILO supported small enterprise owners in selected states with hands-on COVID safety advice using flip-books, guidelines and videos explaining how to prepare the workplaces to return to work after lockdown, under the guidance of the regional OSH specialist. In **Sri Lanka**, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNMPTF) joint ILO–United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) project delivered much needed PPE and psychosocial support services to MSMEs in hard hit districts. The evaluation of this project highlighted the importance of mental health care as part of an OSH response, which is also reflected in the ILO's recent OSH policy narratives.<sup>225</sup>

Indonesia secured funding from Japan to deliver capacity building for OSH at a variety of national, enterprise and community levels. This project strengthened the capacities of relevant government officials, enterprises, OSH professionals, and workers to respond to the present COVID-19 pandemic and future public health crises, and to address other OSH challenges. The project also assessed COVID-19 infection risks and prevention measures at 1,500+ workplaces. OSH doctors advised enterprises based on the assessment results and helped generate action plans to improve COVID-19 prevention measures at the workplaces. It also reached out to informal economy women street vendors with video-based awareness campaigns.<sup>226</sup>

### Protecting wages and working conditions in emerging and non-standard work

The COVID-19 outbreak exposed wages and working condition vulnerabilities for workers in various sectors. The ILO's **Global Wage Report 2020–2021** analysed the trends during the first year of the pandemic and predicted a massive downward trend in wages, and emphasized the importance of collective bargaining and minimum wage setting in the formal sector, while pointing to the biggest impacts on workers in the informal economy.<sup>227, 228</sup> Overall, P&B reporting for the biennium on Output 7.3 (Increased capacity of member States to set adequate wages and promote decent working time) was on target, with 16 Member States reporting measures on minimum wages. However, COVID-19 reporting associated with this output was minimal, with only three entries in the HLE's CPO analysis.

In the formal economy, the **Better Work** programme was proactive in promoting compliance with workers' wages, leave and retrenchment conditions through national level social dialogue and services to member factories, amid the challenges of reduced demand, shrinking production and intermittent closures in the garment industry.<sup>229</sup> Working time and wage issues were specially exposed for workers in new and expanding forms of work during the pandemic, to which the ILO devoted considerable attention.

As documented by the ILO, the public health and social distancing measures introduced because of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated work trends such as **teleworking and platform work** (such as Deliveroo, Grab and a multitude of other platform services) in many sectors and regions around the world.

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225 LKA/20/50/UND. Healthy socio-economic recovery of the micro and small enterprise sector of Sri Lanka.

226 ILO, "[Enhancing COVID-19 prevention at and through workplaces](#)", Project Brief, 2022

227 ILO, "[Global Wage Report 2020–2021. Wages and minimum wages in the time of COVID-19](#)", ILO Flagship report, 2021.

228 P&B biennium reporting showed that results on capacity of Member States to set adequate wages and promote decent working time (Output 7.3) reached the target of 16 countries, suggesting the importance that some countries placed on introducing or improving minimum wage systems.

229 For example, US Department of Labor. [Interim evaluation of Better Work Bangladesh Phase II](#) (Washington, DC: 2021),s

Many staff informants<sup>230</sup> highlighted the elevated concern in the Office about the regulation of teleworkers' working hours, wages and OSH concerns, as well as about gendered impacts where women shoulder the greater responsibility for childcare combined with teleworking. There was also an increased demand for advice from national constituents during the crisis on how to regulate teleworking, which was confirmed by the HLE case studies in the Americas.

In response, the INWORK branch produced a comprehensive **guide on teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond** in July 2020 that incorporated best practices, and was downloaded from the web 15,249 times.<sup>231</sup> According to ILO staff this guide was widely utilized, which was confirmed most notably by stakeholder interviews in Mexico. Subsequently, in 2022 the ILO and WHO collaborated in a jointly produced a technical brief on **Safety and Health in Telework**,<sup>232</sup> which was coordinated on the ILO side by LABADMIN/OSH, with support from the Working Conditions and Equality Department during the analysis of working time and work organization issues.

At the national level, ILO support to the regulation of teleworking culminated in legal amendments in several LAC countries, including **Chile, Colombia and Mexico**, where ILO supported the governments to develop new codes on teleworking conditions and wages. In Mexico, for example, in response to demand from the social partners' during the pandemic for teleworking to be regulated, ILO promoted discussion with the government and contributed to developing a teleworking standard. According to the interview with the **Mexican National Consultative Commission on Safety and Health at Work (COCONASST)**, the teleworking standard is almost complete, and a proposal is underway for ILO to provide advice on implementing the standard.

The ILO also highlighted the expansion of digital labour platforms and the risks to rights of workers in the **World Employment and Social Outlook** report on digital labour platforms in 2021.<sup>233</sup> The report raised the risk of exposure to COVID-19 of platform workers and their need for both OSH and social protection. The report received considerable attention, as implied by its 38,238 web downloads, but action on the issue has been slow globally, especially as there are unresolved questions on the classification of platform workers as employees or self-employed, with implications for the regulation of their work. While some governments have introduced regulations to address various working conditions, in many countries their fundamental rights at work are not governed by national legislation, and their situation is complicated by the transnational nature of the industry, with operators/workers falling under multiple international jurisdictions. As argued in the report, "Ensuring that all workers, irrespective of their contractual status, are covered by key labour standards will be critical, as will social dialogue." While multiple policy action recommendations were made, staff informants were of the view that ILO has not sufficiently advanced advocacy at country and transnational levels on decent work for platform workers.

### Protecting informal economy workers and other vulnerable groups

Informal economy workers were thrown into precarious situations by the pandemic and were harder for governments to reach with COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures than workers with formal employment contracts. In P&B reporting against Output 7.4 (Increased capacity of constituents to provide adequate labour protection to workers in diverse forms of work arrangements, including on digital labour platforms, and in informal employment) results exceeded the target for Member States with diagnosis of the informal economy – 25 countries, compared with the target of 14, indicating the elevated attention to the issue. Analysis of CPO reporting and COVID-19 identified only 13 such reports for Output 7.4.

230 Representatives from WORK QUALITY, INWORK, LABADMIN/OSH, SECTOR

231 ILO, [Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. A practical guide](#) (Geneva: 2020).

232 ILO/WHO, [Healthy and safe telework: Technical brief](#) (Geneva: 2022).

233 ILO, [World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work](#), 2021.

INWORK led cross-department coordination on ILO's response in support of informal economy workers through policy briefs, knowledge products and country-level assessments to guide national policy on OSH and social protection measures for informal economy workers (see section 4.5 on social protection).

In early 2020, INWORK initiated a cross-department Task Team on COVID-19 response in support of informal workers and enterprises to assess the impact of COVID-19 on informal workers and develop responses.<sup>234</sup> The team documented the impact of the pandemic on informal economy workers, producing several research and policy briefs.<sup>235</sup> To support the field-level response on informality, the task team also surveyed field officers to gather inputs on the country-level priorities in response to the needs of informal workers and enterprises impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ILO developed a methodology for impact assessment at country level, in collaboration with UNDP and UN Women, including informal workers' participation in the data collection via a WhatsApp and blog for informal economy workers. The team led the production of 15 country-level assessments of the impact of COVID on informal economy workers, and Q&A guidance to constituents on how to reach informal economy workers, including a joint brief between INWORK and LABADMIN/OSH on OSH guidelines for street workers and vendors.<sup>236</sup> According to several regional and HQ ILO informants, ILO was able to capitalize on the elevated attention paid to informal workers during the period to boost the ongoing drive toward increased formality in countries with high informality.

Examples of direct assistance to informal economy workers included outreach to street vendors in **Indonesia** with COVID-19 prevention awareness, applying the OSH guidelines for street workers. As part of this effort ILO Indonesia ran a video competition on reaching market vendors, which was won by a team of young women whose families belong to these communities.

ILO's work in **India, Nepal and Sri Lanka** through the project "Towards fair and sustainable global supply chains" was significant in channelling direct support to homeworkers in the lowest tier of supply chains in the form of PPE and awareness-raising of the risks of COVID-19 transmission, which was described by ILO informants at HQ and the South Asia region.

At the research and policy level, two major publications were released in 2021, mapping the working conditions of homeworkers and domestic workers worldwide.<sup>239</sup> Both reports describe the impacts of the pandemic on these feminized groups of workers and provided guidance on addressing workers' direct needs as well as policy directions. The report "**Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers**", released to mark the 10th anniversary of the Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189), highlighted the precarious position of the majority of domestic workers in the wake of the pandemic, whether migrant workers or in their own country, noting that "many being obliged to go to work despite the health risks, others losing their jobs, with no access to income-support measures, putting them and their families at risk of falling into poverty or deeper poverty". The report reviewed government efforts around the world to support domestic workers and made recommendations for their immediate needs and long-term occupational formalization.

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234 Recognizing informality as a cross-cutting issue, INWORK Branch, within the Working Condition Department, coordinates across ILO department on informal economy issues.

235 ILO, "COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges", ILO Brief, May 2020.

236 ILO Guide. OSH for street workers and vendors.

237 RAS/17/06/JN. Towards fair and sustainable global supply chains: Promoting formalization and decent work for invisible workers in South Asia Project.

238 ILO, [Working from home. From invisibility to decent work](#) (Geneva: 2021).

239 ILO, [Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers. Progress and Prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#) (Geneva: 2021).

Overall, though, the HLE identified little evidence of ILO support at country-level to protect domestic workers following COVID-19, other than the support to **migrant domestic workers** discussed in the following section. Looking to the future, the CEACR report to the 110th session of the ILC in 2022 focused on the need to secure decent work for domestic workers as well as nursing personnel, paving the way to accelerate action to support workers in both sectors.<sup>240</sup>

### Protecting migrant workers and refugees

**▶▶ The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the critical role migrants play as essential workers, including in healthcare, food supply and other key sectors. It has also exposed their vulnerability to the devastating health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic.**

▶ [ILO Migrant workers webpage](#)

### Overall contribution

The landscape of labour migration was dramatically changed by the pandemic, as migration essentially ceased, and many workers were thrown into precarious situations in countries of destination, were repatriated or forced to leave. In this context, migrant workers' needs shifted from recruitment assistance to access to accommodation, legal advice at destination, repatriation support and reintegration. Drawing on ILO staff interviews and country case study interviews (including **Mexico, Thailand and Viet Nam**), as well as existing project evaluations, **the HLE found that ILO was able to substantially pivot its labour migration portfolio to provide relevant protective assistance to migrants affected by COVID-19 at destination and on return.** This builds on the conclusions of the HLE on labour migration for 2016–2020, which assessed the ILO's early response as highly relevant, both in terms of addressing existing needs and priorities that increased in importance (at destination), and in terms of adjusting interventions to the growing importance of returnee migrant issues.<sup>241</sup>

Based on P&B reporting of results achieved under Output 7.5 (Capacity on labour migration), countries providing protective services during the biennium exceeded the target with 29 countries reporting services. According to P&B reporting most of the results were achieved in Asia and the Pacific, while results were also prominent in the Arab States – countries of destination. From the HLE's analysis of CPO results matched with COVID-19 reporting, Output 7.5 represented 32 per cent of COVID-19-related reports for the Outcome, reflecting the robust response to COVID-19 on services to migrant workers.

### Country-level situation assessments

At the global level, ILO's response to the needs of migrant workers was delivered through situation assessments, policy guidance and tools to support evidence-based policy-making and the inclusion of migrant workers and refugee workers in COVID-19 responses. Numerous related policy briefs and research reports were released in 2020 and 2021.

<sup>240</sup> ILO, CEACR. 2021. Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions and Recommendations. 2020 Survey. [Securing decent work for nursing personnel, domestic workers, key actors in the care economy](#). ILC, 110th Session, 2022.

<sup>241</sup> ILO, *High-level independent evaluation of ILO's strategy and action for promoting fair and effective labour migration policies, 2016–2020*, 2021.

ILO developed a “COVID-19 rapid assessment tool and questionnaire”, adapted for 17 rapid assessments covering countries, subregions or areas of work (for example, recruitment). It published a global analysis of these assessments in 2021, including impacts on migrant workers’ rights and recruitment.<sup>242</sup> ILO also launched a dedicated website with all briefs and statements on protecting migrant workers in the workplace during COVID-19.<sup>243</sup>

**At regional level** in South-East Asia, ILO published a brief on the impact of migrant fishers, in collaboration between the Ship to Shore Rights Project and Cornell University: [Rough seas: The impact of COVID-19 on fishing workers in South-East Asia](#). The research provides an empirical analysis of the short-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region's fishing and seafood trade. It also analyses changes in employment and working conditions for fishers during the pandemic and the relevance of policy responses to the industry and fishers' health and livelihoods.

At the field level, ILO reprogrammed much of its resources across the globe towards direct services in response to COVID-19 for tens of thousands of migrant workers who kept working, were stranded, or were repatriated or forced to leave. These services included PPE, cash transfers, legal aid, shelter, job counselling and reintegration information and skills recognition.

In regions across the world, ILO's migrant worker programmes delivered some of the following protective services during 2020 and 2021:<sup>244</sup>

- ▶ In **Asia and the Pacific**, the regional migrant worker programmes directed their services toward the emergency response. In total an estimated 286,000 migrant workers were reached with food, PPE, and legal support. Over 100,000 received information online. For example, the **TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme** supported 67,070 migrant workers across the six countries of the programme in 2020–2021 with emergency and legal advisory services through the Migrant Resource Centres. The **Ship to Shore Rights South-East Asia** project, in partnership with the Migrant Workers Group in Thailand, provided survival kits and information on prevention of COVID-19 to shrimp processing workers in Samut Sakhon province, where 3,000 workers had contracted the virus. The **SAFE and Fair** project,<sup>245</sup> jointly implemented with UN Women in partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), targeting migrant workers in ASEAN countries delivered advisory support and direct support in several ASEAN countries including Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. In Thailand, the project worked with the State Enterprises Workers Relations Confederation (SERC) to provide services through the Migrant Resource Centre in Songkhla, and COVID-19 assistance to migrant workers in the construction sector in Bangkok. In 2021, the project supported women and men migrant workers with access to COVID-19 vaccinations and over 690 migrant workers were supported with COVID-19 PPE and survival kits.
- ▶ In **the Arab States**, several thousand migrant workers received emergency food and PPE kits (Kuwait), education/training on OSH (Bahrain) and training on social security, legal advice, PPE and OSH guidance (Jordan) (see **Box 11**).
- ▶ In **Africa**, ILO supported 182 Ethiopian migrant workers to claim unpaid wages, and the Tunisia trade union helped 5,000 migrant workers with PPE kits. Cash transfers reached 1,700 returning migrant workers in Ethiopia, Lesotho and South Africa.
- ▶ In **Latin America**, Venezuelan migrants, refugees and nationals in Ecuador and Peru received business start-up capital, Credit and Savings Groups were created in Peru for loans to entrepreneurs, and Colombia gave skills certification to hundreds of migrants and nationals.

242 ILO, [Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment](#) (Geneva: 2021).

243 See: ILO, [“Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic”](#), Policy Brief, 30 April 2020.

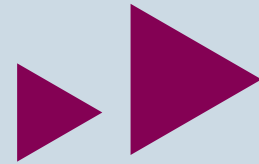
244 Case study material and MIGRANT note provided to HLE.

245 RAS/17/12/UND. Safe and fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region. Funded by the EU and implemented by ILO and UN Women in collaboration with UNODC.

### ▶ **BOX 11: Assistance to migrant workers in Jordan's garment factories**

Prior to the crisis, some 24,000 migrant workers from Bangladesh, Egypt, China, India, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Syrian refugees work in the Al-Hassan industrial zone in Jordan, along with 6,000 local Jordanian workers. Under the ILO's **Work in Freedom project, the Workers' Centre** established in the Al-Hassan industrial zone delivered a wide range of support to women and men migrant workers during 2020 and 2021 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Some thousands of workers were laid off by their employers when the pandemic struck as orders were dropped or became uncertain. Employers arranged chartered flights and embassies arranged evacuation flights to send these workers back.

With the demand for assistance, the Al-Hasan Workers Centre served workers from five industrial zones, as there were no other avenues for support. Workers who remained to work in Jordan were provided with guidance on wages and leave conditions, PPE, OSH and COVID-19 prevention guidance, while workers returning home were assisted with legal advice, and practical help on transport to the airport during restrictions on movement.<sup>246</sup>



The **HLE Thailand case study** learned from staff and project partner informants that the migration programmes in Thailand and South-East Asia have been very active in ensuring migrant workers were provided with assistance responding to their urgent needs. The programmes used their strong existing components on direct support to migrant workers and revised their activities towards emergency response. The programmes have been working closely with their CSO partners in key provinces across Thailand to deliver emergency assistance to Thai workers.

However, the partners shared observations that "although the programmes are willing to provide assistance and are very supportive, the (ILO) approval process, financial regulations, M&E framework and reporting become burdensome to the partners' beneficiaries". In addition, in terms of **policy advocacy during the crisis**, despite the ILO effort, it appears that the tripartite plus approach became fragmented. Partners said that the ILO should have taken a lead in policy advocacy and **where possible tripartite-plus engagement should have been strengthened, especially during the crisis when migrant workers became more vulnerable.**

As highlighted in **Section 4.3** of the report, ILO also supported returning migrants with **skills recognition** in several South Asian countries, as well as skills development programmes targeting returning migrants and refugees in Indonesia under the COVID-19 response project.

#### **Collaborative action on the future protection of migrant workers**

Looking forward, as labour migration begins to rise again, ILO is participating in various regional networks around the world as well as multilateral agency efforts to guide future directions for fair and rights-based labour migration. On the research front, this includes ILO's collaboration in the joint publication by ADB institute, OECD and ILO, on [Labour migration in Asia. COVID-19 impacts, challenges and policy responses](#), which draws on discussions between policy makers and experts at the 11th ADBI-OECD-ILO Roundtable on Labor Migration: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic and Building Back Better, held in April 2021.

<sup>246</sup> Project Coordinator communication.



### Protection efforts promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion

The ILO's four pillar COVID-19 policy called for gender and diversity inclusion as a cross-cutting issue, spanning employment, skills, protection and social protection policies, while the 2021 Call to Action on COVID-19 went further in emphasizing the importance of gender-transformative and inclusive path to recovery. (Para I.B.h.)<sup>247</sup>

The ILO made concerted efforts to document the many adverse impacts of the pandemic on the world of work at the intersection of gender and forms of marginalization. It also undertook advocacy on addressing the specific needs of women workers and vulnerable groups in a transformative way. Against this backdrop, the P&B biennium reporting records the lowest expenditure against Outcome 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work) compared with other outcomes, accounting for 2 per cent of total expenditure. Key ILO informants suggested that the relatively low resourcing of gender and diversity concerns reflects the relative interest of the constituents in investing in and seeking resources for these responses, as well as reduced human resources within units of the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) branch itself.<sup>248</sup> Nevertheless, gender responses to the pandemic are also reflected across other policy outcome areas, including employment and skills development, a range of protection issues, and social protection. Significant attention to gender equality concerns in the ILO COVID-19 response was also reflected in the HLE's analysis of CPO reporting.<sup>249</sup> Major global programmes such as Better Work and the VZF devoted resources to gender equality in sectors where women predominate. ILO achievements on promoting gender equality, equality and inclusion in the pandemic response are discussed further below.

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247 ILO COVID-19 Call to Action.

248 HLE analysis of CPO reporting and COVID-19 reports identified 20 on COVID-19 activities associated with Outcome 6 out of a total of 375 entries.

249 The HLE analysis of COVID-19-related interventions under Outcome 7 showed that 68 per cent of the projects (54/79 entries) were gender-tagged as making a significant contribution to gender equality and non-discrimination or had gender equality as the principal objective. Similarly, the HLE analysis of COVID-19-related actions under social protection, where more than half of reported actions contributed to gender concerns.

## Gender policy actions

From the onset of the pandemic, the ILO's GEDI branch documented the adverse effects on women workers, not only in terms of job loss, but also the gendered impacts of the pandemic on conditions at work including OSH, violence and harassment, and hours and wages in feminized sectors, and the additional unpaid care burdens in the face of lockdowns and work-from-home regulations. At the global level, policy briefs were produced on:

- ▶ Gendered impacts on the labour markets and the need for gender equal national employment policies. These briefs also pointed to the intersectionality of employment impacts on women in informal work and vulnerable groups.<sup>250</sup>

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- ▶ **The phenomenon of increased violence and harassment towards women at work following COVID-19, including towards essential workers in health, where women predominate.** The GEDI branch published a policy brief regarding the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), pointing to its elevated relevance to the impacts of the pandemic.<sup>251</sup> ILO national-level advocacy on the importance of this convention saw increased ratifications during the period.

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- ▶ **Gendered impacts on workers in the health and care sectors and advocacy on investment in the care economy.**<sup>252</sup> ILO's advocacy on increased investment in the care economy post-COVID included improved wages and conditions of workers in healthcare, long-term care facilities, and domestic work. The July 2021 policy brief called for "Promotion of appropriate public and private investment in the care sector, which has the strong potential not only to expand decent work opportunities – especially for women – but also strengthen the resilience of economies and societies and enable workers with family responsibilities to engage in employment." In 2022, ILO's policy work continued to raise the profile of the care economy and health sector, and the need to protect the conditions of workers in these feminized sectors. The CEACR report to the ILC in 2022 called for urgent attention to improve employment opportunity and working conditions in these essential sectors.<sup>253</sup>

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While the policy briefs set out a blueprint for action on all these issues, ILO action on the ground took place through gender mainstreaming in existing programmes, COVID-19 projects targeting women and beneficiaries, as well as through advice to constituents. The **Better Work programme** made intensified efforts in several countries to protect garment sector workers from COVID-19 impacts on women's rights and equality, including discrimination, violence and harassment. In **Indonesia**, for example, where women account for 80 per cent of workers enrolled in factories under Better Work Indonesia, a key concern was to continue protecting workers and women's rights and the continuity of employment. Advice and guidance issued by Better Work Indonesia during this period reflected gender considerations; while specific awareness raising, and campaigning efforts focused on women's rights and issues related to managing work-life balance during COVID-19.<sup>254</sup> As discussed in **Section 4.3**, several employment generation projects targeting women in the COVID-19 recovery were also initiated with COVID-19-response funding.

250 ILO, "[The COVID-19 response. Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work](#)", Policy Brief, May 2020. ILO, "[Building forward fairer. Women's rights to work and at work at the core of the COVID-19 recovery](#)", Policy Brief, July 2021.

ILO, "[An uneven and gender unequal COVID-19 recovery. Update on gender and employment trends 2021](#)", Policy Brief, October 2021.

251 ILO, [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\): 12 ways it can support the COVID-19 response and recovery](#), ILO Brief, May 2020.

252 WHO and ILO, [The gender pay gap in the health and care sector. A global analysis in the time of COVID-19 Geneva: 2022](#).

253 ILO, CEACR, Report III. [Part B. ILC 2022, Report of the CEACR to the ILC, Securing decent work for nursing personnel and domestic workers – key actors in the care economy](#), March 2022.

254 ILO, [Better Work Indonesia Annual Report 2020](#), 2021.

## Inclusion and protection of marginalized groups

As an early response, ILO produced a series of briefs assessing the potential impact of the pandemic on several disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities,<sup>255</sup> indigenous peoples<sup>256</sup> and people living with HIV/AIDS and affected communities. Looking to the recovery, and the rapidly increasing digitization of work, ILO has made efforts to include persons with disabilities in training on e-commerce, for example, through the joint-UN Employment and Livelihoods (EGLR) COVID-19-response project in Indonesia. The ILO Global Business and Disability Network and the Foundation for the Cooperation and Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Fundación ONCE), partners of the initiative Disability Hub Europe, prioritized the topic of participation by persons with disabilities in digitalization.<sup>257</sup>

The ILO's contribution to countering **discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS and affected communities** were delivered mainly through the partnership with UNAIDS and the global HIV/AIDS programme. Reflecting this partnership, in Indonesia, ILO partnered with UNAIDS and local NGOs to train people from a range of backgrounds affected by HIV/AIDS to reach out to the private sector to conduct awareness raising on equal opportunity rights and for people and communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Informants to the evaluation of the project conveyed their increased sense of empowerment through the training.

The HLE learned of valuable initiatives to assess the needs of indigenous communities in the face of the pandemic, frequently isolated from COVID-19 information, and whose livelihoods are threatened by mobility restrictions. The ILO's **Indigenous Navigator initiative** used a participatory community-based methodology to gather rich understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on indigenous communities in 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The report published in October 2020 makes recommendations on how to best support their inclusion in COVID-19 mitigation and a resilient recovery.<sup>258</sup> The initiative also prepared a specific study on the impacts of the pandemic on women in indigenous communities, highlighting their specific vulnerabilities.<sup>259</sup> The HLE was not able to identify the extent to which the recommendations have been applied overall, but specific projects under the LABADMIN/OSH portfolio addressed the needs of ethnic minority people working in plantation crops such as coffee in the Americas and South East Asia, ensuring that information was accessible in local languages and by visual media.

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255 ILO, "[COVID-19 and the World of Work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response](#)", Policy Brief, 4 June 2020.

256 ILO, "[COVID-19 and the world of work. A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples](#)", Policy Brief, May 2020.

257 ILO and Fundación Once. [An Inclusive digital economy for persons with disabilities](#), February 2021.

258 WGIA and ILO, [The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous communities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator](#), 2020.

259 WIGA and ILO, [Indigenous women's realities: Insights from the Indigenous Navigator](#), 2020.

## ACTION PROMOTING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

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**▶▶ The pandemic has exposed pronounced gaps in social protection coverage, comprehensiveness and adequacy across all countries. These have left a number of population groups, including women, children and workers in different forms of employment and in the informal economy, very vulnerable.**

▶ [World Social Protection Report 2020–22](#)

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### KEY POINTS

- ▶ The pandemic has exposed the urgency of maintaining and increasing efforts to build universal, comprehensive, adequate, and sustainable social protection systems. Some 1,891 social protection measures were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of these were temporary and insufficient. The crisis has also impacted countries' resources, creating additional challenges.
- ▶ With social protection elevated on the agenda of governments, demand for ILO's support has greatly increased – for example, annual requests to strengthen unemployment protection schemes increased from five pre-pandemic to 29 in 2020.
- ▶ The ILO supported Member States to identify needs and gaps and to conduct impact assessments in all regions, ensuring that developments were guided by social dialogue and the ILO normative framework.
- ▶ Existing programmes were adapted, and new support mobilized to reflect a shift in priorities from long-term system building to immediate support for affected people.
- ▶ Although the ILO is not normally involved in delivering emergency cash transfer, during COVID they sometimes allowed the ILO to be at the table during the humanitarian phase, giving it an entry point for the design of longer term approaches in the recovery. However, working in this area requires speed and agility that the ILO may not always be able to offer. Working with other UN partners, the ILO did play a central role in shaping joint COVID-19 cash transfer and temporary wage subsidies in 20 Member States.
- ▶ The pandemic highlighted how social protection systems needed to be sustainable, resilient and responsive to shocks. The ILO supported national social protection strategies or legislation, promoted the integration of contributory and tax-funded measures to extend coverage, improved information management systems, supported financial sustainability checks of social security schemes and feasibility studies on the extension of coverage, including workers in the informal economy.
- ▶ The crisis exposed the precarious situation of marginalized groups and vulnerable populations, and the ongoing relevance of the ILO's work in supporting these groups. Women were disproportionately affected and, in more than 50 per cent of the countries, the ILO responded to the pandemic by implementing social protection interventions contributing primarily or significantly to gender equality.

## Context

More than 4 billion people in the world are still not covered by any social protection system.<sup>260</sup> Only a third of the world's working-age population have their income security protected by law in the event of sickness. Only 35.4 per cent of the global labour force have effective access to employment injury protection. Only 18.6 per cent of unemployed workers worldwide have effective coverage for unemployment and thus actually receive unemployment benefits.

The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing labour market and structural socioeconomic inequalities within and across countries.<sup>261</sup>

- ▶ The crisis had a disproportionately severe impact on low- and medium-skilled workers and on self-employed workers, and on those who could not work from home.

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- ▶ More than 60 per cent of the global employed population – some 2 billion men and women – make their living in the informal economy. Most often they are neither affiliated with contributory schemes nor reached by narrowly targeted social assistance.

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- ▶ Migrants and the forcibly displaced were among the first to lose their jobs and faced significant barriers to re-entering the workforce. They also confronted many challenges in accessing social protection due to the lack of citizenship or legal residency status, and in many cases the informal nature of their employment.

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- ▶ Pre-existing barriers and inequalities faced by indigenous peoples and people with disabilities were further accentuated by COVID-19. Ethnic minority communities and lower income groups have also accounted for disproportionately high rates of infections and fatalities.

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- ▶ Women were also more adversely affected by the crisis, either from losing their job more often as being proportionally employed in sectors more impacted by the pandemic, or by facing heavier workload such as in the health sector where women make 70 per cent of the workforce. Closure of schools, childcare services, and long-term care homes brought disproportionately additional tasks on to women.

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- ▶ More than 800 million children and young people were also affected by the closure of schools, universities and childcare services.

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<sup>260</sup> The right to social security and an adequate standard of living is recognized in a range of human rights conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 22 and 25). The ILO promotes policies and supports countries to set adequate levels of social protection to all members of society. The ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) are among the key international social security standards adopted by the ILO's tripartite constituents.

<sup>261</sup> ILO, [World Social Protection Report 2020–22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future](#), 2021.

To protect health, jobs and incomes, the pandemic led countries into unprecedented policy responses. According to the ILO Social Protection Monitor,<sup>262</sup> since February 2020 a total of 211 countries and territories introduced 1,891 social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Social protection measures adopted in response to the pandemic addressed inter alia:

- ▶ income protection, such as sickness benefits, old age, survivor and disability benefits, social assistance, cash transfers and other support;
- ▶ unemployment protection, such as preventing job losses and supporting those who lost their jobs;
- ▶ access to health care, including for vulnerable groups, such as migrants;
- ▶ family leave and care policies, such as childcare and other social services;
- ▶ protection of jobs and the liquidity of enterprises through job retention schemes, waiver of contributions, modifying temporarily the payment of social security contributions and tax payments for enterprises;
- ▶ adapting administrative procedures and delivery mechanisms.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the urgency to maintain and increase efforts to build universal, comprehensive, adequate, and sustainable social protection systems. However, many measures were temporary and not sufficient to respond to peoples' needs. The crisis has also impacted countries' resources and created additional challenges for the adoption and implementation of universal social protection systems.

### ILO Action

The need to respond to the crisis has put social protection high on the agenda of governments and has also increased the demand for ILO's support in designing and implementing emergency social protection responses. Irrespective of the countries' social protection systems, the ILO received in particular a large number of requests to build and strengthen unemployment protection schemes. The annual number of such requests increased from five (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) to 29 in 2020.<sup>263</sup>

### Assessing social protection gaps and needs

Overall, the ILO was agile in responding to the demands of constituents. Conversations were promptly held by SOCPRO with regional specialists in the four regions. At global level, the Office developed tools and guidelines, such as the rapid social protection calculator for COVID-19 to support countries in making rapid adjustments to social protection systems in response to the pandemic.<sup>264</sup> At country level, the Office provided support to **needs, gaps and impact assessments** in all regions. For example, the project teams of the EU-funded Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management (SP&PFM) programme engaged with governments, social partners and civil society organizations on the COVID-19 pandemic responses. The programme supported **impact assessments**, focusing on workers in the informal economy in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Togo and Uganda as well as the development of options to build back better in the recovery phase post-pandemic in Ecuador, Myanmar, Peru and Togo. In Jordan, the Office conducted an **analysis of social protection gaps** to inform the development of an ILO–Social Security Corporation Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the ILO contributed to the government

262 ILO, "[Social Protection Monitor: announced measures throughout the world](#)", SPM database, updated 30 September 2022.

263 ILO, [Global Flagship Programme: Building social protection floors for all. Report of the first phase 2016–2020](#), October 2021.

264 ILO, "[Resource: Rapid social protection calculator for COVID-19](#)", 2020.

report entitled “Examining the Social Impact of COVID-19” and supported the Government in exploring options for an unemployment insurance scheme. In Lebanon, assistance was provided for a **quantitative assessment** of social protection needs and gaps. In Madagascar, the ILO jointly with UNIDO published a **rapid assessment** of the impact of the COVID-19 on jobs and production and possible recovery actions including extending social protection coverage. In West Africa, the ILO launched rapid assessment surveys to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work, focusing on the informal sector. Rapid assessments were conducted through WhatsApp and telephone interviews. In several countries the ILO provided support to national statistical offices to build capacities in conducting these types of surveys.

### Developing social protection responses through social dialogue

While the crisis required the ILO to redirect resources to COVID-19-related deliverables, support to the Member States continued to be guided by **social dialogue** and the ILO normative framework. The ILO facilitated national dialogues and evidence-based costing, fiscal space and impact analyses for the assessment and design of unemployment insurance and universal health protections, which were at the heart of COVID-19 responses in many countries. In Mozambique for example, ILO participated in the **Technical Advisory Group** also involving the Northern Ireland Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Sweden, the World Bank, UNICEF and WFP, created to support Government of Mozambique (through the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action) to design and implement an adequate response to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations. Effective social dialogue informed the national social protection strategy and emergency response plans. In garment-producing countries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with limited fiscal space, the ILO mobilized resources from development partners in support of the immediate needs of affected workers. Governments were simultaneously assisted in developing rights-based social protection systems guided by international labour standards. The evaluation synthesis noted the “high-level success for the ILO in the form of Better Work’s role in development of the COVID-19 call to action for the garment industry. This required consultation with global brands, manufacturers, and employers’ and workers’ organizations”.<sup>265</sup> The ILO’s involvement ensured that **social partners were included** in the process of designing and implementing job retention programmes in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, as well as income-support measures, in countries such as Indonesia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, reaching more than 45,000 beneficiaries.

### Re-purposing social protection projects and developing new interventions

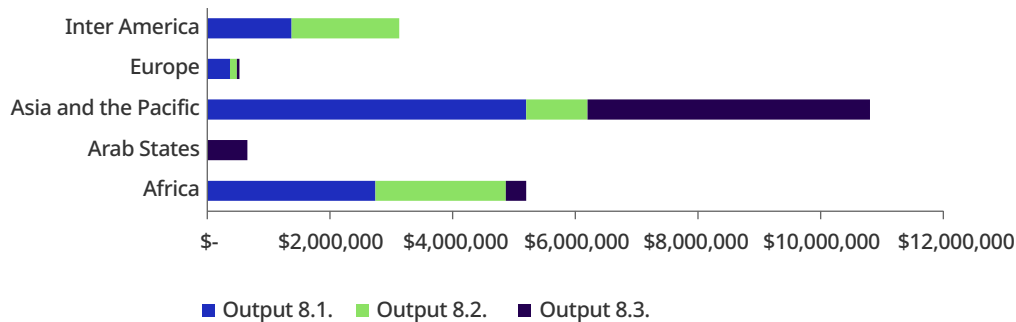
To respond to these renewed and pressing demands for support, the ILO **adapted ongoing programmes and mobilized additional support**. The pandemic led national governments to a shift priorities from the traditional delivery chain focusing on long-term system building to creating immediate impacts on people in order to mitigate the socioeconomic effects of the crisis. The evaluation found that more than US\$20.3 million in development cooperation projects under Outcome 8 were (re-)directed to the COVID-19 response. The Asia and the Pacific and the African regions re-purposed or mobilized higher development cooperation resources for social protection in response to the crisis (**Figure 9**). Overall, re-allocations supported more frequently policy-related interventions (Output 8.1.), but with some variations across regions. In the Arab States for example, the ILO primarily focused on social protection interventions to build the capacities of constituents (Output 8.3). According to the evaluation survey, constituents in Asia and the Pacific found the ILO more effective than in other regions in responding to the crisis through social protection interventions. Informants from Africa pointed out the ILO’s limited staffing capacity in

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265 ILO. [ILO’s response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic. A synthesis review](#), 2021.

the region, with one social protection specialist covering sometimes more than 15 countries. As noted earlier, social protection coverage in the region also has a very low baseline. To address these issues, in November 2021, the ILO launched a regional social protection strategy with a view to achieving a target of 40 per cent social protection coverage for Africa by 2025 (Figure 21).

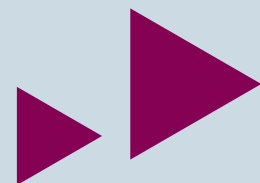
**FIGURE 21: RE-PURPOSED OR NEW RESOURCES (IN US\$) PER REGION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECTS UNDER OUTCOME 8.**



According to informants, **donors proved flexible** and willing to re-orient activities to support new priorities. In the Arab States for example, the Regional Office relied strongly on development cooperation projects to mitigate the lack of internal resources to support countries on social protection. These projects were used to supplement the DWT expert with an array of international experts. This applied to both adapting existing projects and starting new projects. A number of UN SDG Fund projects (in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Sao Tome and Principe) also re-purposed funding to better respond to the socioeconomic needs arising from COVID-19. Another example of adaptive management is provided by the EU-funded SP&PFM programme.

**► BOX 12: Improving synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management**

The EU-funded “Improving synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management” programme provided the flexibility to respond to countries’ needs. Funds were re-purposed for the eight countries receiving three-years of support from the programme (Angola, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Paraguay, Senegal and Uganda). These projects were able to rapidly engage with the government and social partners and provided technical support to assess the impact of the crisis and design the social protection related COVID-19 response. In addition, a total of EUR 2 million were allocated to support 10 countries (Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Malawi, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru, Sri Lanka and Togo) in strengthening their social protection systems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.






### Mobilizing and delivering emergency cash transfers

Emergency cash transfers and income support are not normally the core mandate of the ILO. Emergency cash transfers are most often a short-term option that do not look into longer term system and policy changes which are required to establish and implement a functioning social protection system. However, according to informants and previous evaluations, it is important for the ILO to be at the table during the humanitarian phase as response plans are elaborated, decisions taken, and resources committed, which will influence recovery. According to informants, the ILO has the capability to bring social partners into these consultations and can seize emergency cash transfers as an entry point for the design of long-term contributory (for example, unemployment insurance, sickness benefits) or non-contributory social protection systems as well as to extend social security coverage to workers in the informal economy.

With support from BMZ, the ILO supported the design and implementation of **emergency wage subsidies** and cash transfers targeting about 210,000 workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The project started in September 2020 but faced some challenges and remains at different stages of progress. Funds were released in Ethiopia, Indonesia (for a first phase) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. However, tripartite consultations are still on-going in Bangladesh and beneficiaries have still to be selected in Cambodia. Cash transfers have not yet been operated in those two countries.<sup>266</sup> Evaluation informants expressed the dual view that, on the one hand, emergency cash transfers were relevant to influence social protection transformations, but, on the other hand, this modality challenged limited capacities and institutional agility in the ILO. As one staff member said: "Some other conditionalities may apply to deliver cash transfers, such as the willingness of the government to implement this modality, the scale of the intervention, institutional capacities in the country, partnerships."

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 **We developed the concept note in 2 or 3 days, but it took months to get the first dollars through and then we needed to recruit etc. In a crisis you need speed but we had to contend with a bureaucratic process to release the funds - supplier forms, sending off to Lima... Meanwhile weeks and months are passing by. The ILO needs to be there on the ground when the crisis is really big and happening.**

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Initially, the lack of a policy and operational framework as well as divergent opinions about the opportunity to engage the Office in cash transfers brought staff into a vacuum. To address this gap, PARDEV developed in 2–3 weeks a guidance brief on the development of cash transfers that some staff found useful in the COVID crisis context as signalling the ILO's willingness to operate such modality. However, the note has remained internal and was neither widely circulated nor institutionally endorsed. The evaluation synthesis and informants reported a lack of corporate policy framework on emergency cash transfers in the ILO. SOCPRO has recently commissioned a position paper on this matter.

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<sup>266</sup> L. Nycander, Stakeholder Workshop. 10 March 2022. Preliminary findings of the Independent final evaluation of "Protecting garment sector workers: Occupational safety, health, and income support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" project. PowerPoint presentation, 2022.

### Supporting countries in setting up and delivering emergency cash transfers

In countries where there was no comprehensive social protection system in place, the ILO also **supported governments in implementing ad hoc mechanisms to deliver emergency cash transfer** programmes, sometimes in addition to contributing to a delivery of emergency cash transfers. The ILO played a central role in shaping UN joint COVID-19 responses that led to the delivery of cash transfers and temporary wage subsidies in 20 Member States, benefitting, for example, almost 680,000 households in Cambodia, where 350,000 workers also benefited from a temporary wage subsidy scheme.<sup>267</sup> Some of the ILO's interventions and achievements include:<sup>268</sup>

- ▶ Timor-Leste: With the support from the COVID-19 Multi Partner Joint Trust Fund, the ILO led development partners on the UN side and provided direct technical assistance throughout the design, implementation and evaluation of the COVID-19 social cash transfer. The cash transfer programme provided US\$100 a month for two months to 300,000 households.

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- ▶ Mozambique: The ILO supported the upscaling of an existing cash transfer programme, benefitting 592,000 households, and the establishment of a new cash transfer programme targeting 990,000 beneficiaries not previously covered. The first phase of a new income support programme for vulnerable groups attracted over US\$75 million.

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- ▶ Zambia: The ILO supported the implementation of the emergency cash transfer programme in collaboration with other UN agencies – UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and other non-profit organizations. The ILO supported studies to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy and recovery needs assessments for populations in the informal economy.

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- ▶ Malawi: The ILO supported the implementation of the COVID-19 pandemic urban cash intervention, which targeted more than 300,000 Malawians who participate in small-scale trade to address the escalated urban poverty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was an extension of the existing social cash transfer programme, which targets rural dwellers. The Office contributed to the development of a rapid assessment and registration criteria with a methodology involving innovative targeting techniques that applied a blend of geographical mapping and vulnerability assessment exercises on the ground. The initiative used electronic payment system (mobile money).

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- ▶ Pakistan: The ILO conducted a rapid assessment of income and job losses as a result of the pandemic, which helped the Government set up an emergency cash transfer programme that provided 12 million poor and vulnerable households with a one-off payment of 12,000 Pakistan rupees (US\$75).

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- ▶ Jordan: The ILO supported the design and implementation of the Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund (EUESF) for the COVID-19 pandemic to provide immediate social protection benefits to vulnerable workers and gradually integrate them into the national social security scheme.

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- ▶ Nigeria: The ILO supported an increase of cash transfer programme beneficiaries from 2 million to 3 million people by contributing to the extension of the national social registries.

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267 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

268 ILO, [Global Flagship Programme. Building social protection floors for all. Report of the first phase 2016–2020](#), 2021.

### ► BOX 13: Innovating with a “Basket Fund” in Madagascar

In response to the crisis and its effects on the informal sector, the ILO joined forces with the Groupement des Entreprises Malgaches (GEM) to set up a “Basket Fund” project to support workers in companies in this hard-hit sector affected by the health crisis. This innovative approach consisted of opening an account to which candidate companies could subscribe and contribute in cash or in kind (food, fuel, etc.) to support workers made redundant and on technical unemployment without insurance. The ILO formulated and presented the idea to the GEM and recruited a consultant for coordination, contacting companies, collecting donations. WFP provided storage and distribution for the ILO. The Basket Fund was in operation for one year, from August 2020 to July 2021. The overall effect of the operation is estimated at nearly 430 million Ariary, divided into cash donations, food and non-food items, medical equipment and medicines, and services. As a result, 3,402 working families were able to benefit from cash assistance through a money transfer by mobile money; 559 families with food and non-food items, and 134 families of workers from companies located in the southern part of Madagascar received a 50 kg bag of rice per family. Respirators for medical use were also given to public hospitals and private clinics. This initiative has also enabled the GEM to better know the ILO, which gained in visibility, and bring the WFP closer to the GEM. The Secretary General of the Workers’ Representatives (CTM) was invited to join this process and bipartite CTM-GEM conferences were organized.

### Formulating policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis

The ILO’s approach to social protection is based on **international instruments and normative standards**, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 22 and 25), the Convention 102 on minimum standards of social security, and the ILO’s Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). In 2016, the ILO launched the *Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection for All* to propose concrete measures and activities to support the design and implementation of sustainable national social protection systems, including floors, in target countries. The first phase of the programme (2016–2010) articulated four pillars: (i) in-country support; (ii) cross-country policy advice; (iii) knowledge development and sharing; and (iv) strategic partnerships. Evaluation informants indicated that the **conceptual framework** of the programme proved robust and remained valid during the pandemic. Building largely on its original design, the programme’s ToC and priorities were refined for the second phase (2021–2025), including by adding a thematic area on “Adaptation of social protection systems to new and emerging challenges”.

At global level, the ILO integrated Social Protection in all four pillars of the **policy framework** for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic also informed the discussions and conclusions of the **ILC** in June 2021, which noted that the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis “[...] add further urgency to establishing universal social protection systems adapted to the developments in the world of work that are resilient, effective, inclusive, adequate and sustainable over the long term.”<sup>269</sup> The ILC requested the Director-General to submit an action plan on social protection (social security) to the GB at its 343rd Session. Universal social protection – including access to unemployment protection, adequate paid sick leave and sickness benefits, and health and care services – was also put forward in the **Global Call to Action**.<sup>270</sup> In March 2022, the GB requested the Office to prepare future programme and budget proposals “with a view to furthering measures aimed at securing and extending social protection for migrant workers and their families through all relevant ILO means of action”.<sup>271</sup>

269 ILO, [Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection \(social security\)](#), [ILC.109/Resolution III](#) (19 June 2021).

270 ILO, [Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient](#), [ILC.109th Session](#) (2021).

271 ILO, [Decision on securing social protection for migrant workers and their families: Challenges and options for building a better future](#), GB.344/POL/1 (2022), para. 27.

At country level, the COVID-19 crisis also highlighted the urgency of strengthening social protection systems to ensure that they are sustainable, resilient and responsive to shocks. The ILO's response entailed promoting the development of social protection systems that are anchored in sound legal frameworks and backed by sustainable financing. In response to the crisis and to constituent's demands, the Office emphasized the integration and coherence between contributory and non-contributory schemes, coordination with social, economic and fiscal policies, and support to extending coverage to workers in the informal economy. In Thailand for example, the Office advised the Government to not allow drawing on pension funds for emergency needs and to strengthen contributory social protection. Over the course of the biennium, the ILO reported P&B results in 25 countries (Output 8.1) in designing and developing **national social protection strategies or legislation**, promoting the integration of contributory and tax-funded measures that led to extensions of coverage and the comprehensiveness and adequacy of protection in relation to health and unemployment.<sup>272</sup> The ILO also assisted in the development of legislation encompassing several social protection branches or an overarching framework for the sector, and in the design and implementation of new benefits and schemes – and the extension of existing ones – to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Sri Lanka for example accelerated plans to work on income security focused on tourism workers, which will serve as a pilot for other sectors.

### Strengthening the governance and financial sustainability of social protection systems

The ILO reported results in 32 countries on strengthening the **governance and financial sustainability** of systems (Output 8.2) during the biennium.<sup>273</sup> Interventions increasing the capacity of Member States to improve the governance and sustainability of social protection systems in response to the crisis covered several dimensions.

- ▶ **Governance, institutional coordination, and administrative capacities:** The ILO contributed to improvements of information management systems and technological infrastructure in 15 countries. In Nigeria, for example, the Office supported the increase in the number of cash transfer programme beneficiaries from 2 million to 3 million people by contributing to the extension of the national social registries. In Mozambique, the ILO also helped build a registry system for informal workers that was transitioned to the social security institution for sustainability. In Senegal, the Office has supported the development of the Dashboard for monitoring the performance indicators of social security institutions. This digital tool allows the Ministry of Labour to have real-time information on the efficiency and performance of social security institutions and to produce aggregated statistics on the social security sector. The impacts of COVID-19 on the performance indicators of social security institutions were analysed from November 2020 to March 2021, using this tool in particular, and recommendations were made for better resilience of these institutions in the face of shocks.
- ▶ **Financial management and fiscal, financial and economic sustainability:** The ILO supported financial sustainability checks of social security schemes, advised on investment management, as well as on feasibility studies on the extension of coverage through actuarial valuations. Some of the countries that were supported include Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria and Thailand. In Nepal, for example, government officials lauded the ILO's support in establishing and building the capacity of the Social Security Fund. The fund expanded and reinforced workers' social protection, relieving pressure on traditional social safety net programmes designed to serve Nepal's poorest of the poor.<sup>274</sup> In Swaziland, through a RBSA project, the ILO provided support to the establishment of an unemployment benefit fund.

272 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

273 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

274 ILO, ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic - A synthesis review. (Evaluation Office, 2021).

- ▶ **National statistical capacities and monitoring the SDGs:** As many as 15 countries improved the availability and quality of their social protection data, including the monitoring of SDG indicator 1.3.1. Constituents' capacity building was conducted virtually, including through the Turin Centre's Social Security Academy. The social protection component of the course "Work and Employment for a Sustainable Future" was launched in an effort to expand outreach.

Interventions aimed also at strengthening the resilience of countries. In Eswatini for example, the Government requested the ILO's support for the establishment of an Unemployment Benefit Scheme (UBS) as part of measures towards comprehensive social security reforms and efforts to mitigate the impact of future crises. In response, the ILO developed a RBSA project aimed at the establishment of the UBS as part of social protection system building in the country. Despite such achievements, supported by a body of conventions and recommendations (for example, R205<sup>275</sup>), several informants expressed the opinion that the ILO has had limited engagement in the past on building the capacities of national constituents to prepare and confront systemic shocks.

▶▶ **"Being hit by a war is not the same thing as being hit at work individually. If your entire community is hit as well, and nobody else can help you, and the government systems and the government capacity to help is also overwhelmed, because of the scale of the shock... Obviously covariant shocks versus idiosyncratic shocks are different than I think we need to make provision for. What do we do specifically for covariant shocks? I think the theory of change of the ILO is around idiosyncratic shocks throughout the lifecycle. But it doesn't take into account these risks that hit communities at large and obviously jeopardize even the government capacity to develop social protection for the regular contingencies."**

### Increasing capacities to integrate social protection in comprehensive policy responses

The ILO also contributed to results in relation to the adoption of comprehensive **integrated responses to address COVID-19** that included social protection in 13 countries.<sup>276</sup> The ILO provided technical expertise on integrating social protection policies, several of which seek to expand social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy. In Pakistan, the ILO focused on extending social protection coverage to informal workers and has also been working towards the design of Pakistan's first unemployment insurance programme. Knowledge products were also developed to provide technical guidance and share country experiences.

275 ILO, [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) FAQ – Version 3.0](#), 13 April 2021; ILO, [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 \(No. 205\)](#).

276 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

## Developing capacities and knowledge products

SOCPRO developed 12 **policy publications** concerning social protection. The Regional Office in Bangkok also published a first brief as early as 24 March 2020.<sup>277</sup> A policy brief was published in April 2020 to share experiences and response measures from countries to inform upstream policy options for constituents and partners.<sup>278</sup> The Office also promoted unemployment protection<sup>279</sup> as well as child and family benefits, old-age pensions, disability benefits and social assistance.<sup>280</sup> Other briefs addressed issues such as income support and health protection,<sup>281</sup> migrant workers,<sup>282</sup> or the informal economy.<sup>283</sup> The ILO's *World Social Protection Report 2020–2022* was launched in September 2021 and was downloaded more than 13,000 times. The findings of the report, together with the ILO estimates on the financing gap for a social protection floor, supported the case for social protection in the UN Secretary-General's initiative on a Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection (see Section 406 below). Altogether, the number of policy publications produced by SOCPRO has been moderate compared to other departments, such as EMPLOYMENT which released 33 COVID-related policy publications, WORKQUALITY which delivered 32, or SECTOR which produced 31 sectoral briefs. Furthermore, the average number of downloads per policy publication was much lower for SOCPRO than for other departments (for example, more than 9,000 downloads on average per publication from the Research department, more than 8,000 for EMPLOYMENT as well as for SECTOR, and slightly over 2,600 for SOCPRO).

More than 70 country pages with a section on COVID-19 were created on the Social Protection Platform.<sup>284</sup> Knowledge products and tools were made available on a COVID-19 portal installed on the Social Protection Platform.<sup>285</sup> Furthermore, the Office set up the ILO Social Protection Monitor interactive dashboard which presents an overview of more than 1,600 national social protection response measures announced in 209 countries and territories.<sup>286</sup> The tool was used for advocacy to showcase countries reacting to the crisis through social protection measures, and for learning and uptake by presenting how they were responding. The Office also developed a range of tools and policy advice with regard to the costing, financing, and long-term sustainability of social protection schemes, including a Rapid Social Protection Calculator<sup>287</sup> to help cost and scope cash transfer interventions.

Capacity building of constituents was conducted virtually, including through the Turin Centre's Social Security Academy. The social protection component of the course "Work and Employment for a Sustainable Future" was launched to expand outreach.

277 ILO-UNESCAP, [Social protection responses to the Covid-19 crisis. Country responses in Asia and the Pacific. The story so far and future considerations](#), 2020.

278 ILO, "[Social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis: Country responses and policy considerations](#)", ILO Brief, 23 April 2020.

279 ILO, "[Unemployment protection in the COVID-19 crisis: Country responses and policy consideration](#)", Policy Brief, 16 September 2020.

280 ILO, "[Social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries: Strengthening resilience by building universal social protection](#)", ILO Brief, 14 May 2020.

281 ILO, "[Sickness benefits during sick leave and quarantine: Country responses and policy considerations in the context of COVID-19](#)", ILO Brief, 14 May 2020.

282 ILO, "[Social protection for migrant workers: A necessary response to the COVID-19 crisis](#)", ILO Brief, 23 June 2020.

283 ILO, "[Extending social protection to informal workers in the COVID-19 crisis: country responses and policy considerations](#)", ILO Brief, 8 September 2020.

284 ILO, "[Social Protection News](#)".

285 ILO, "[Social Protection Response to the COVID-19 Crisis](#)".

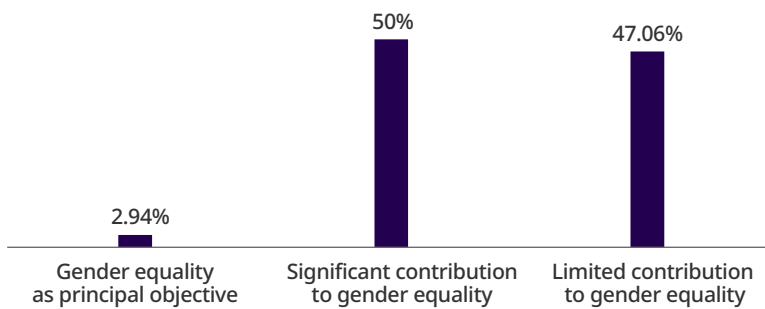
286 ILO, "[Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 Crisis around the World](#)".

287 ILO, Resource: [Rapid social protection calculator for COVID-19](#) database, accessed 12 October 2022.

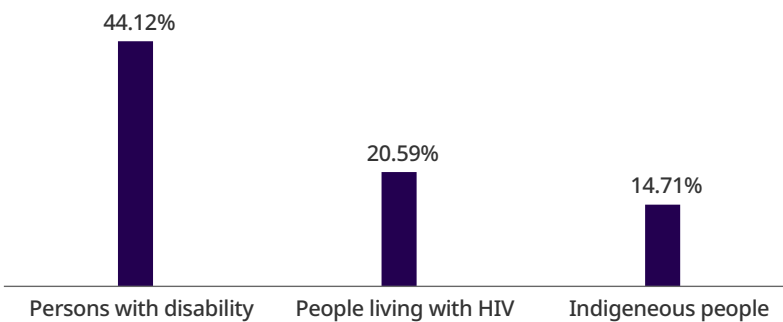
**Targeting vulnerable groups, including migrants and informal workers.**

The COVID-19 crisis exposed the precarious situation of **marginalized groups and vulnerable populations** around the world including: women with home-care needs who were dropping out of the labour force; migrants returning to their home countries without revenue or social protection, or finding themselves stranded, jobless and without social protection in destination countries; informal workers without income support or savings making lockdowns impossible to follow; and disabled people and people living with health conditions confronted with difficult access to health care. The pandemic exposed these vulnerabilities and the ongoing relevance of ILO’s work in supporting these groups, and in guiding improvements in national policy frameworks and social protection systems. In more than 50 per cent of the countries,<sup>288</sup> the ILO responded to the pandemic by implementing social protection interventions contributing primarily or significantly to gender equality (Figure 22). Persons with disabilities were among the beneficiaries of COVID-19-related social protection interventions in more than 44 per cent of the country programmes (Figure 23).

**FIGURE 22: PERCENTAGE OF ILO COUNTRY PROGRAMMES WITH COVID-19-RELATED SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUALITY**



**FIGURE 23: PERCENTAGE OF ILO COUNTRY PROGRAMMES WITH COVID-19-RELATED SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS TARGETING VULNERABLE GROUPS**



<sup>288</sup> Based on the analysis of the CPO database. The sample identified 34 countries implementing COVID-related interventions under Outcome 8.

In targeting or supporting vulnerable populations, the ILO's interventions adopted various forms, three of which are highlighted below.

- ▶ **Women:** In Madagascar, the Office facilitated the affiliation of 100 households headed by vulnerable women in two regions of southern Madagascar to the Basic Health Centers by paying their subscription in order to be able to benefit from health care and medicines for a period of 12 months. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the ILO ensured that constituents nominated women representatives and raised constituents' awareness on specific gender concerns that needed to be considered while proposing recovery policies. Women were the priority in the cash transfer for a mother and early childhood programme and formed more than 80 per cent of garment workers who received the wage subsidies. In Mozambique, the COVID-19 Social Protection Response Plan, which was developed with the support of the Technical Advisory Group that includes the ILO, incorporated a strong gender component in the eligibility criteria of the Direct Social Support Programme – Post Emergency COVID-19. The programme was created to address the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable and prioritized households headed by women. In Eswatini, the ILO's actuarial valuation considered the employment situation of women when modelling the Unemployment Benefit Scheme.

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- ▶ **Informal workers, refugees, and migrants:** In South Africa, the Office re-purposed project funds in dialogue with the Government and donors. Financial relief was provided to migrant domestic workers from Botswana in South Africa as they were among the most disadvantaged groups and could not access any of the relief packages from the host government. In Thailand, the ILO provided migrant workers with PPEs, food, and legal assistance to file for unemployment benefits and other services. In Jordan, the ILO delivered a study on "Opportunities for extending social security coverage in Jordan" which was key to inform the refinement of the Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund (EUESF) design. Through social dialogue, a broader discussion was also engaged on the extension of social security coverage to informal workers, including refugees and migrant workers. In May 2022, the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), the Social Security Corporation (SSC) and the ILO signed an agreement for the implementation of a new initiative titled Estidama++ Fund – Extension of Coverage and Formalization. The project will promote formalization in the most vulnerable sectors in the Jordanian economy by providing income support and subsidizing contributions of Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers, including refugees, so as to promote their registration and participation in the SSC.

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- ▶ **People living with HIV and persons with disabilities:** In India, activities on HIV/AIDS/TB and Disability Inclusion remained on-going in collaboration with constituents. The ILO and the Gujarat State AIDS Control Society implemented an integrated service delivery approach under which informal migrant workers received information and services on COVID-19 as well as HIV. In Madagascar, the National Council to fight HIV and the ILO worked together to identify the needs of people living with HIV. This informed a plan of action to tackle the effect of COVID-19 on informal economy workers living with HIV and tuberculosis (TB).

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## Collaboration and partnerships

Internally, SOCPRO leveraged and engaged the Social Protection (SP) **Global Technical Team** (GTT) in formulating and delivering initiatives contributing to the crisis response. Since its creation in 2015, the SP GTT has grown to comprise 200 members including the SOCPRO team, regional social protection specialists based in subregional decent work teams as well as project staff in programme countries. In 2020, SOCPRO organized five online sessions with the GTT focusing on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>289</sup> In order to identify countries' challenges and responses, SOCPRO relied on HQ informants' consultations with members. However, the GTT lacked a network and a mutual support capability to channel direct requests from members and to facilitate exchanges and discussions originating from the field. Some stakeholders indicated that the ILO was currently exploring the option to turn the GTTs into communities of practice in order to increase their added value.

Informants also mentioned increased **collaboration between SOCPRO and other departments** during the crisis. In April 2020, SOCPRO and Better Work launched a *Call for Action in the Global Garment Industry* to catalyze action from across the global garment industry and support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption caused by the pandemic by protecting garment workers' income, health, and employment. This initiative also called for work to establish sustainable systems of social protection for a more just and resilient garment industry. It triggered support from VZF/ILO and from BMZ (EUR 14.5 million) to garment and textile factories and workers (direct beneficiaries) and their family members (indirect beneficiaries) in five countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic). Informants considered the call successful in bringing social dialogue actors together at the country level but less in raising capital. However, it created closer collaboration between SOCPRO, EMPLOYMENT and ENTERPRISES and improved coherence between the departments which "in the past had very different viewpoints" according to an informant. Furthermore, from a longer term perspective, it also proved promising. The three departments are now engaged in developing the Global Accelerator - which "would not have happened without COVID" according to a senior staff member.

During the biennium, the ILO was able to enhance its global visibility and its influence in the multilateral arena. SOCPRO contributed to shaping the UN's socioeconomic response to COVID-19,<sup>290</sup> which placed social protection and basic services as one of the five pillars of the United Nations Development System response. In April 2020, the ILO jointly with SPIAC-B<sup>291</sup> published a Statement on the Role of Social Protection in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic calling for urgent action to ensure access to health services and income security and to prioritize the most vulnerable.<sup>292</sup> The ILO also developed a new approach on "invest more and invest better" in social protection which aims to increase domestic/international resources for social protection through closer interactions with ministries of finance, IFI's and donors at the country level, while promoting the application of ILO guiding principles in the choice of policy and financing options for social protection. As part of this process, collaboration was increased with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on social protection and social spending. In Togo for example, the ILO collaborated with the IMF and the World Bank (WB) to determine the content of social spending as part of the process of signing a Credit Facility Agreement between the IMF and the Government of Togo. Collaboration on social protection extension, financing and good governance was also one of the areas of focus of the ILO-UNDP global agreement signed in July 2020.

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289 Online sessions covered, 26/02/2020: Working together on social protection; 26/03/2020: Working as one GTT on COVID 19; 02/04/2020: ILO social protection response to COVID 19; 14/04/2020: Adapting social protection delivery mechanisms in the context of COVID-19; 12/05/2020: Opportunities to increase fiscal space for social protection and build longer-term social protection systems.

290 UN Sustainable Development Group. A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, April 2020.

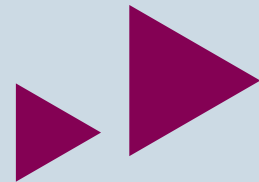
291 SPIAC-B is composed of 25 intergovernmental agencies and 10 governmental bodies; 11 civil society organizations act as observers.

292 SPIAC-B, A Joint Statement on the Role of Social Protection in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020.

In countries such as Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, the ILO collaborated with the **UN Country Teams** to provide policy advice to the respective governments in assessing announced social protection policy responses, identifying gaps and proposing additional measures. In Myanmar, the Office contributed to the "UN Socio-Economic Response Framework to COVID-19 in Myanmar" (UN-SERF).<sup>293</sup> The UN-SERF was organized into five pillars and combined downstream support to delivery systems and communities and upstream support to policy and programme management by government, business associations, labour unions and civil society. The ILO in Myanmar contributed actively to the development of UN-SERF and due to its active participation and leadership, ILO became co-lead of three pillars (Pillar 2 – Protecting People: Social protection and basic services; Pillar 3 – Economic Recovery; and Pillar 5 – Social Cohesion and Community Resilience) among the five pillars. As a co-lead, ILO drafted the social protection section which emphasized how to scale up and expand resilient and pro-poor social protection systems including suggested policy measures and mitigation actions. In Cambodia, UNCT collaboration was important in supporting the launch of a new cash transfer, covering around 600,000 households and impacting more than 2 million persons. In Thailand, this collaboration prompted the Government to include old-age, disability and child allowances in a package representing an extraordinary increase in benefits, which impacted more than 11 million people (Box 14). Several informants highlighted the importance of developing such strong UN partnerships on social protection and of reinforcing the ILO's leadership in this area due to its comparative advantages, including normative instruments and expertise, systemic approach, long-term perspective, and networks of constituents and social dialogue.

#### ► **BOX 14: Jointly advocating for Leaving No-one Behind in Thailand**

In response to the Royal Thai Government's (RTG) stimulus package announced on 5 May 2021, the UN Joint Programme (UNJP) on Social Protection for All in Thailand sent the RTG a "Technical Note on Protecting the Most Vulnerable from Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19", providing recommendations to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy and requesting the RTG to take into account the vulnerabilities of the most affected communities, families with children, people with disabilities, older adults, and migrant workers who were left out or have difficulties in accessing the proposed stimulus package. The UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand submitted the technical brief note to the Prime Minister, and members of the Cabinet. The technical note along with a cover letter signed by heads of all four UN agencies in Thailand – the ILO, IOM, UNICEF and UN Women – was also sent to the Labour Minister, Finance Minister, Social Development and Human Security Minister, and the Secretary-General of the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council.



293 [UNSDG | A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar](#)

### The Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection.

The UN Secretary-General's initiative of a Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection has also placed the ILO in a lead role in joint efforts to support countries in building universal social protection systems, based on additional domestic and international financing (see also Section 4.6 on UN collaboration). The Global Accelerator<sup>294</sup> is an initiative to enhance multilateral cooperation, bringing together different stakeholders to create a new era of universal social protection, green and job-rich growth, and put the world back on track to reach SDG 1 and SDG 8. Building on existing initiatives, the Global Accelerator aims to **create at least 400 million jobs**, primarily in the green and care economies, and **extend social protection floors** to the 4 billion people currently not covered, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries, small island developing states and nations in fragile situations. This is intended to be achieved by mobilizing financial resources for fiscal stimulus measures and for social protection floors, developing a technical support facility that brings together the expertise of the UN system and by creating a high-ambition coalition of countries to promote job creation in the digital economy, support transitions to the formal economy and increase women's employment. Bringing the World Bank and the IMF into play with the Accelerator is also expected to build stronger coherence across the multilateral system and help to reconcile disparate visions of social protection.

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294 ILO, "[Press release: The world needs a global accelerator for jobs and social protection](#)", 14 October 2021,

## ALIGNING ILO ACTION WITH UN AND GLOBAL RESPONSE AND SDGS

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From the onset of the pandemic, the Office stepped up its engagement with other UN agencies considerably. The Office made significant contributions to the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19... led the production of the UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief on the World of Work and COVID-19... [and] partnered with other agencies to produce a statistical perspective on how COVID-19 is changing labour markets and the collection of labour statistics. The Office also contributed to the UN Policy brief on Human Rights and COVID-19 and to the Joint Statement on a disability-inclusive response to the COVID-19 crisis. At country level, the ILO's national officers and decent work teams worked in UNCTs around the world to assist in the design and delivery of COVID-19 national response programmes.

▶ ILO Director-General

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## KEY POINTS

- ▶ Initiatives and partnerships launched in response to COVID-19 require an unprecedented level of funding but so far funding received by ILO has not reflected this need. The high profile of UN reform and multilateral collaboration expressed in policy statements and calls for action have so far generated only a small proportion of the UN funding required to target COVID recovery.
- ▶ Increased calls for new models of development financing highlight the ILO's relatively limited capacity in this area. It lacks the large finance hubs present in such organizations as UNDP. The UN Secretary General has emphasized the need to move forward for "whole government" approaches; not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas, but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process. To pursue this new direction, ILO will need greater finance expertise.
- ▶ ILO also lacks the human resources required to work more effectively with other UN agencies, especially at the country level where the pandemic's expansion of cooperative agreements and partnerships with UN and other multilateral bodies has greatly increased the workload.
- ▶ Various mechanisms for enhancing multilateral collaboration and coordination were initiated in response to the pandemic, including the UNDP-ILO Framework for Action, which prioritized actions between UNDP and ILO in selected areas that would increase synergy, and global and regional partnerships with other UN entities (for example, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO). ILO also played a prominent role in high-level meetings of the G7, G20, and BRICS and in drafting the Just Transition Declaration, endorsed by more than 30 nations at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Scotland.
- ▶ At the country level, the ILO was reported to have influenced more than 120 UN Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs) although it is difficult to substantiate this or to estimate the degree of influence achieved.
- ▶ Despite the new impetus provided by the pandemic for improved collaboration, coordination and policy coherence between multilateral agencies, significant barriers and disincentives remain.
- ▶ The Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, launched by the UN Secretary-General and ILO, aims to create at least 400 million jobs and extend social protection floors to the 4 billion people currently not covered. The scope and scale of the initiative has huge resource implications for the ILO.

## Context

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) established the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Targets, which guide overall UN efforts to address global poverty. The Agenda aims to be universal, inclusive, transformative and based on the normative framework of the UN system. The UN Development System (UNDS) has primary responsibility for promoting and supporting global efforts to attain the SDGs. The UNDS includes 15 specialized agencies, 23 funds, programmes, research institutes and other entities, as well as numerous functional and regional commissions and subsidiary bodies. In this context, the ILO is responsible for assisting Member States to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, social justice and decent work for all – while also contributing to the realization of all the SDGs and targets.

Since 2017, the UN has been undergoing a reform process that aims to strengthen the cooperation, coherence and results-based orientation of the UNDS at the country, regional and global levels in support of the 2030 Agenda. The ILO is actively involved in UN reform, ensuring that the Decent Work Agenda remains integrated in new policy frameworks and that tripartism and social dialogue are promoted throughout the process. These efforts aim to ensure that ILO collaborates with other members of the UN system to “deliver as one”, while also fully valuing the unique and complementary contributions of each member of the UNDS.

From 2017 to 2019, the UN system contributed nearly US\$89.7 million to ILO interventions, making it the third largest contributor of voluntary funding to the ILO for this period. ILO projects implemented with the financial support of organizations in the UN system accounted for around 9 per cent of the ILO's total active development cooperation projects as of April 2021. The ILO also plays a key role in a range of Joint UN Programmes and draws on the potential of UN Multi-Partner Trust Funds to bring decent work to all.

The foundations of ILO's current approach to its mandate were laid by the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which enables priorities to be set for the ILO's work, as outlined in the P&B. In September 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution welcoming the Centenary Declaration and calling on bodies in the United Nations Development System to consider integrating its policy proposals into their work. In the context of the pandemic response, the Call to Action requests multilateral institutions to increase coherence and support for human-centred recovery strategies and emphasizes the need for the ILO to assume a leadership role.

In 2020, the GB endorsed the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2020–2025). The strategy seeks to integrate development cooperation more effectively into the programme and budget processes with a view to increasing the coherence of ILO action in delivering services to constituents and ensuring an optimal use of all ILO resources to achieve sustainable results and impact. In this framework, the ILO has initiated structured funding dialogues as a new way of securing predictable and adequate funding for ILO priorities.

## ILO Action

### ILO contribution to the financial architecture of the global pandemic response

A major policy area to emerge as an ILO priority during the pandemic was Financing for Development, particularly focusing on socioeconomic recovery financing. **ILO has emerged as one of the lead UN agencies in this area**, which contributed to the 2021 Global Accelerator and later the UN Socio-Economic Framework. By spring 2020, ILO was already involved in a Socio-Economic Framework with UNDP, which helped formalize relations, which had been called for in the Framework of Action. In parallel, there were many Member State meetings with the IMF and the World Bank, attempting to influence them to move their emphasis from austerity to an expanded role for public finance.

On 28 May 2020, the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica and the UN Secretary-General launched the Initiative on **Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond (FfDI)** to identify and promote concrete financing solutions to the COVID-19 health and development emergency. After several High-Level Events, a roadmap was created to continue the work on the FfDI track and promote implementation of priority policies. Six clusters were established with the **ILO leading the cluster on socioeconomic response, social protection, gender, youth, health, education, and human rights.**

The ILO Call to Action built upon a substantial body of international discussions and decisions on financing. It recognized that ILO needs more resources to advance its programmes and policies. **ILO also promoted a high-level policy forum, which led to a September 2021 forum with the UN Secretary-General's Office.** After this, in the General Assembly, the **UN Secretary-General launched jointly with ILO, the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection** with the aim of creating at least 400 million jobs by 2030, primarily in the green and care economies, and extending social protection floors to over 4 billion people currently not covered. He also gave the lead on this Accelerator to ILO, a decision which ILO respondents observed had not been expected by UNDP.

Despite some progressive steps, for which ILO has played an influencing role, **performance of the IFIs in response to COVID has so far been limited.**<sup>295</sup> While the IMF and the World Bank quickly committed substantial resources to new and rapid financial assistance for up to 100 developing countries, this represented new debt, issued predominantly on non-concessional terms, but with a larger share of policy-unconditional lending. Debt relief was limited to the cancellation of US\$851 million in debt service payments due to the IMF between April 2020 and the end of 2021 for 29 of the poorest developing countries.

**ILO delivered numerous studies projecting the costs of labour market growth for recovery.** It also convened meetings with Member States, civil society, workers' and employers' organizations, which fed into *Policy Briefs* and, later, the launch of the Global Accelerator. **ILO also influenced an IMF Special Drawing Rights decision in 2021;** whilst a Special Envoy on Financing from the IMF helped design the Global Accelerator. ILO now needs to deliver on its enhanced profile as a major player in financing to aid labour market recovery.

### Financing the ILO's work with UN and multilateral partners

The rich and complex environment of initiatives and partnerships launched in response to COVID-19 required an unprecedented level of funding to be channelled through the UN system. In the 2020–21 biennium, which included the immediate response period of the pandemic, **funding received by ILO did not reflect this need.** The ILO recorded US\$666.4 million in total approvals during 2020–2021, as well as US\$34.4 millions of voluntary core funding for the RBSA. While the targets set for the biennium were not reached, the contributions in 2020–21 were viewed positively considering that many key resource partners faced fiscal and budgetary challenges related to the COVID-19 response and recovery costs. Funding partners also showed considerable flexibility in re-purposing their contributions from earlier years to support national COVID-19 responses.

Some new and additional contributions were received, including from the UN multi-partner **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.** ILO is a member of the Advisory Committee for this Fund established by the UN Secretary-General to help support low- and middle-income programme countries to respond to the pandemic and its impacts. The Fund targets those most vulnerable to economic hardship and social disruption<sup>296</sup> and has served as an essential finance mechanism towards operationalizing the United Nations Framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19. Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need are key principles of the UN system response and provide a roadmap for global social and economic recovery from the pandemic.<sup>297</sup> An example from Indonesia is described in **Box 15.**

295 UNCTAD, [Financing for development: Mobilizing sustainable development finance beyond COVID-19. Note by the UNCTAD secretariat](#), January 2022 (TD/B/EFD/5/2).

296 ILO, "[ILO and the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#)".

297 United Nations, [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#) (New York, NY: March 2020).

The Fund issued its first call in April 2020. **ILO participated in eight joint UN Programmes** developed in response to the first round of proposals. ILO's involvement in these Joint Programmes covered social protection and support to MSMEs as well as promoting OSH, including for vulnerable workers, and rapid assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on labour markets.

The Fund was established with an initial target of US\$1 billion for 2020 and a further US\$1 billion for 2021. However, by the end of 2021, only US\$86 million had been received, suggesting substantial under-resourcing, with associated limitations on the range and scope of initiatives, which could be implemented. This is supported by the fact that Fund expenditures by this time were only US\$50 million globally. **Although SDG 8 is covered by the fund, ILO has not been a major recipient from this source.** By the end of 2021, it had budgeted resources from the fund of just US\$6.56 million, of which US\$4.37m had been spent, with a delivery rate of 66 per cent.

After its initial phase, the Fund's second Call for Proposals received 250 proposals, only 19 of which were initially funded. This suggests serious challenges for multilateral activities at country level moving forward, since the proportion of successful proposals is sufficiently low to discourage further applications. This is particularly so given the reported high transaction costs of putting together joint proposals in the UNCT system. Although the call for greater multilateral collaboration expressed in policy statements has stimulated such partnerships from field-level to high-level agreements, these have so far generated only a small proportion of the UN funding required to target COVID recovery.

An area in which ILO has become increasingly engaged during the development of global responses to Covid is development financing. DDG Policy has been pushing the need for countries to **develop national financial frameworks and considering how ILO can best promote these** through national dialogue under the tripartite approach.

An Internal challenge raised by some senior respondents concerns what they regard as the **relatively limited capacity of ILO on financing**. It lacks the large finance hubs present in such organizations as UNDP. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need to move forward for "whole government" approaches; not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas, but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process. To meet this new direction, ILO and its constituents will need greater finance expertise. ILO has already begun training Member States' ministries of labour on how to access finance. As ILO's engagement in global Covid-19 recovery expands, it will **need enhanced specialist expertise in development financing, enabling the formulation of new policy approaches in this area.**

### Staffing the ILO's work with UN and multilateral partners

In terms of the **human resources** required to work more effectively with other UN agencies, **weaknesses at a country level have been exposed** and reported to the GB. COVID-19 has led to a major expansion of cooperative agreements and partnerships with UN and other multilateral bodies. As these have moved into implementation, ILO's **workload has substantially increased, especially at country level**, where collaboration with UNCTs has become more intense. Pressures of COVID responses gave rise to extensive ad hoc work to develop specific approaches for countries with particular challenges. The workload became exhausting and is regarded as unsustainable in the long term. Headquarters teams also reported greatly increased workloads, often dealt with by the addition of short-term expertise.

Reflecting on these trends, the HLE interprets ILO's position as one that will require substantive action. As response transitions into recovery (at different rates across partner countries), ILO will need to make a detailed comparison of its staff resources globally with the greatly increased workload implied by the numerous multilateral agreements it has concluded as part of the wider UN response to COVID. If these agreements are to deliver on the bold projected development results, it is inevitable that ILO will need to scale up its operations, particularly at country level. It appears unlikely that this can be achieved efficiently through the widespread use of short-term contract staff or consultancies. This suggests that pressure will fall on the GB to review resources and staffing projections, in the light of the existing policies.



A recent MOPAN Assessment reported<sup>298</sup> that the “zero-growth budget upheld by the GB requires any changes in funding priorities to be accommodated within the existing budget range through cost-savings and efficiency measures. These trade-offs have negatively affected the ILO’s performance at the field level and hamper the efficiency of key processes due to insufficient human resources, as evidenced in documents and underlined by many partners”. If the ambitious intentions of the various calls for action, agreements, etc., of the UN system in general and ILO in particular are not to dwindle to isolated advances of limited scale, it seems inevitable that the GB will need to revisit its staffing and budgetary policies.

### Enhancing collaboration and coordination with UN and multilateral partners

Various mechanisms for enhancing multilateral collaboration and coordination were initiated in response to the pandemic. Through a joint letter dated 16 September 2020, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ILO’s Director-General established the **UNDP-ILO Framework for Action**. This laid out the principles for strengthening the collaboration between the two entities and reaffirmed their willingness to pursue joint efforts to maintain close and continuing working relationships in order to achieve their respective mandates as well as their individual and common purposes.

The Framework presented prioritized actions between UNDP and ILO in selected areas that would increase synergy, given the shared policy space and mandates – enhancing support to least developed countries (LDCs) and crisis countries and having greater impact at scale. The aim was also to move forward actions that demonstrated how the ILO and the UNDP coming together can be more efficient – focusing on gains from joint work and policy coherence, starting with a limited number of countries to be jointly identified and vetted by their respective regional directors.

Other **global and regional partnerships with UN entities** during the pandemic, as reported to the GB, have included<sup>299</sup> UNICEF, UN Women, WHO and UNESCO, covering such issues as OSH, skills development,<sup>300</sup> and women’s entrepreneurship.

ILO also played a prominent role in high-level meetings of the **G7, G20, and BRICS**, focusing on topics such as the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on labour markets, building back greener, financing of social protection, remote work, impact on women and on platform workers in the gig economy. In terms of ensuring that pandemic recovery is environmentally sustainable, the ILO played a key role in drafting the Just Transition Declaration, endorsed by more than 30 nations at the UN Climate Change Conference in Scotland, which recognizes the need to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to net zero economies.<sup>301</sup>

At country level, the ILO’s contribution to multilateral responses to the pandemic can be seen in the extent to which it brought tripartite partners into UN Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) processes. It is reported that 120+ SERPs were influenced by ILO, although it is difficult to substantiate this or to estimate the degree of influence achieved. Nevertheless, it is evident that the combined effects of support and promotion from the UN Secretary-General’s Office and the heightened appreciation of ILO’s labour market expertise, building on COVID Monitor and other products, have given ILO a “place at the table” both with UNCTs and governments in many countries where this was not previously the case. The ILO also contributed to UN Common Country Analyses and UN Sustainable Cooperation Frameworks, facilitating constituent engagement in their development, and incorporating decent work elements. The 10 DWCPs developed in the period aligned with these cooperation frameworks, increasing the potential for synergies with UN agencies in their implementation.

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298 MOPAN Assessment Overview, p. 7.


299 GB.344/PFA/1(Rev.1)

300 For example, a new partnership that brings together the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth (DJY), led by the ILO, and Generation Unlimited (GenU), led by UNICEF, and capitalizes on the multi-stakeholder memberships of both agencies to bring scale and impact to efforts for and with young people.

301 ILO, “Press release: ILO welcomes COP26 Just Transition Declaration”, 5 November 2021.

To further promote collaboration and coordination in the recovery from the pandemic, in 2021, the UN Secretary-General released a report, *Our Common Agenda*,<sup>302</sup> designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements. The centrality of the ILO's work to key elements of this agenda were highlighted – especially in relation to decent work for all, universal social protection, rights and protections for all workers, and the transition to the green economy – as were key policy instruments such as the Centenary Declaration, and the Guidelines for a Just Transition. The ILO's work exploring the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection was also highlighted and it was in this context that the ILO was to take the lead in the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection (see below).

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 **While the UN agencies have acquired solid experience in working together through the diverse mechanisms at country levels... that have been put in place, the entire system still tends to incentivize UN agencies to work in silos. In other words, while there is a strong accountability system within each individual organization, there is little horizontal accountability across UN entities that would incentivize cooperation among them. This evaluation confirms that collaboration tends to rely on the goodwill and personal motivation of the staff within each partner organization.**

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Despite the new impetus provided by the pandemic for improved collaboration, coordination and policy coherence between multilateral agencies, **significant barriers and disincentives remain**. For example, a 2021 evaluation of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth<sup>303</sup> noted that, although the project aimed to increase coherence and collaboration between partners around youth employment issues, evidence showed that other major actors also launched their own initiatives on youth employment. Evaluators also found that collaboration in this context was not straightforward.

Similar concerns were expressed in an assessment of the UN's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.<sup>304</sup> It found that, while progress in UNDS reforms in 2019 had helped to enable rapid implementation of the COVID-19 MPTF and had contributed to a more cohesive response through the SERPs, there were still limitations due to UNCTs not being able to collaborate at country level – limitations that suggested there is considerable work left to fully realize the reforms.

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302 UN Foundation, Report: *Our Common Agenda*. Report of the Secretary-General, 2021.

303 ILO, Support to the preparatory activities of the ILO to launch the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth – independent final evaluation, 2020.

304 UN, Early Lessons and Evaluability Assessment of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, 2021, p. v).

## The Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection

The Global Accelerator is an initiative to enhance multilateral cooperation, bringing together different stakeholders to create a new era of universal social protection, green and job-rich growth, and put the world back on track to reach SDG 1 and SDG 8. Building on existing initiatives, the Global Accelerator aims to create at least 400 million jobs, primarily in the green and care economies, and extend social protection floors to the 4 billion people currently not covered, focusing on low- and middle-income countries, small island developing states and nations in fragile situations.

The financial implications of the Accelerator are huge: at least US\$982 billion in fiscal stimulus measures is needed to respond to the immediate labour market shocks of the COVID-19 crisis and to support a just transition, as well as US\$1.2 trillion annually for social protection floors in low- and middle-income countries. The Accelerator was launched at a High-level Meeting, convened jointly by the UN Secretary-General and ILO and was attended by heads of the IFIs, heads of states and government and international organizations. It was later presented at the 76th UN General Assembly under the aegis of the Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative (FfDI), which is supported by ILO as well as by the ITUC, which published recommendations on Financing Recovery and Building the Economy of the Future on its website.

For ILO, the intended scope of Accelerator activities raises the “need for additional temporary RB resources to absorb the additional workload under the Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection which is directly linked to the Flagship programme.” ILO is hosting technical support for the Accelerator. Activities are already under way but face the challenge of scaling up at country level.

Accurate and timely data were one of the most pressing needs for all stakeholders during the pandemic. The Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System usually meets twice a year, but during the pandemic it met more regularly. It issued a UN statistics report, which built on the work of ILO STAT. During COVID, there was stronger UN Coordination than usual on statistics. Even the Secretary-General noted the need for a UN-wide data strategy in this area.

*ILO Monitor* rapidly gained a pre-eminent position as a source of reliable statistics on the labour market effects of the pandemic and of responses to these around the world. The pandemic brought ILO offices generating and using labour market data together with greater coherence than usual and gave rise to much new work. Going forward, this enhanced approach needs to be formalized through development of an overall ILO statistical strategy.

## The Global Forum for a Human-Centred Recovery

In February 2022, a three-day Global Forum addressed the need for multilateral policy coherence, which catalysed additional commitments from various parts of the UN and multilateral system. Commitments to the objectives of a human-centred recovery were made by the WHO, UNDP, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the OECD, Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, WTO, World Bank, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNICEF, African Development Bank (ADB), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Special Envoy on Climate and Finance.

Emerging from the Global Forum were many new partnerships and multilateral agreements involving the ILO and intended to advance human-centred recovery including:

- ▶ A new partnership with UNDP to develop a common roadmap for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection, and to launch and implement the joint Global Initiative on Fostering Pathways to Formality.

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- ▶ An agreement with WHO to strengthen the links between health sector and world of work institutions, aimed at better protecting workers from mental health risks and occupational injuries and diseases and preparing workplaces for health crises.

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- ▶ A new framework agreement to be developed with the EBRD to strengthen cooperation on projects, and technical assistance in such areas as gender equality, a just transition and climate action for jobs.

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- ▶ A new Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with the IsDB to support a human-centred recovery, which envisages cooperation in such areas as youth economic empowerment, gender equality, decent work in crisis settings, and fostering South-South Triangular Cooperation

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- ▶ Collaboration with the ADB to improve social protection system capacity and data harmonization, in support of the Bank's climate change financing.

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- ▶ Cooperation between OECD and ILO on just transition and productivity growth.

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- ▶ Collaboration with the African Development Bank in the areas of skill development and youth employment.

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- ▶ Partnerships with UNICEF and the wider UN family to ensure progress in the achievement of universal social protection.

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- ▶ A strong commitment by the World Bank to the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030), chaired jointly with the ILO.

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## ► BOX 15: Case study – Indonesia – economic empowerment of women and vulnerable populations

This joint ILO, UNDP, UNHCR and UNAIDS initiative (ELJP) aimed to improve employment and livelihoods among women and vulnerable groups that have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis in Indonesia. It received US\$1.7 million funding from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN COVID-19 MPTF). An independent evaluation of the initiative has been completed and some of its key findings are reported here.

ELJP had national coverage with a focus on disadvantaged areas of the country, particularly the Eastern region. There were three intended outputs:

- Output 1: 2,000 women and vulnerable groups have their entrepreneurship skills enhanced and their essential business development support increased.
- Output 2: People living in disadvantaged regions (Eastern part of Indonesia and rural areas) have their economic potential improved or recovered.
- Output 3: Government, employers and workers have heightened awareness of the importance of gender equality at the workplace.

The ELJP was highly relevant to the need to re-build employment and livelihood prospects in Indonesia after the COVID-19 pandemic struck, particularly with regard to the needs of women and people from vulnerable groups in the population.

Both the design and implementation of the programme reflected a high level of collaboration and cohesion among the four UN agencies. This was verified by collaborative actions by UNAIDS and UNHCR in support of the ILO and UNDP training interventions, through their networks with the beneficiaries and expertise, as well as collaboration in advocacy. At the level of donor reporting and government communications, coherence was also well supported by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO).

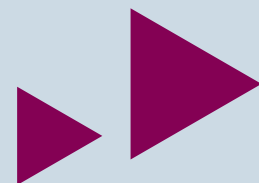
The UN Resident Coordinator's Office oversaw management of the programme as a whole, supported by a management and coordination team of focal points from each of the UN partners. This structure worked efficiently, especially benefiting from ILO's strong coordination efforts. Staffing provision per agency was effective and efficient overall.

The programme's Results-based Monitoring (RBM) framework and its indicators applied the principles of results-based monitoring to a moderate extent, but some indicators were not well defined, and monitoring of outcomes and initial impacts was not consistently applied.

At the individual and community level, the short-term interventions of the programme generated important changes in people's livelihood opportunities, demonstrated by the early signs of increasing income found in ILO's closing survey. The programme indirectly improved the capacity of implementing partners, including capacity to deliver online, wider partnerships and increased knowledge. Overall, the programme helped a significant number of people to adapt to the economic impacts of the pandemic and shift to new and emerging digitized jobs.

The central sustainability strategies of the programme were founded in advocacy interventions towards fairer and more inclusive workplaces. Sustainable results are evident in the heightened capacity of the key actors – media, government, employers' groups and trade unions – to improve gender and inclusion in the workplace. The programme generated some sustainable training resources that can be accessed by a wider audience or re-used by the partners in the future.

Source: ILO. 2022. Employment and livelihood: An inclusive approach to economic empowerment of women and vulnerable populations in Indonesia (COVID-19). Independent joint final evaluation.



## ANALYSIS OF CPOS AND FINANCIAL DATABASES

### KEY POINTS

- ▶ Total expenditure related to the ILO's COVID response was over US\$180.6 million.
- ▶ Based on the HLE's analysis, the largest expenditures on COVID-19 response actions by region were in Asia and the Pacific and Africa (each over US\$58 million), followed by Europe and Central Asia (US\$31.1 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (US\$23.4 million) and the Arab States (US\$9.4 million). Highest expenditures at the country level were Turkey, Timor-Leste, Egypt, Bangladesh and Colombia and these were also the top five countries with gender-related responses to COVID.
- ▶ COVID-19 response actions provided as a UN joint response were particularly concentrated in Nepal, Madagascar and Viet Nam.
- ▶ Concerning global products, most focused on social protection and OSH, and were linked to a flagship programme.

### Analytical strategy

Data from the ILO's Decent Work results dashboard and the ILO FINANCE Department were used to undertake the CPO analysis and to determine related expenditure figures. The analytical strategy developed by this HLE for the CPO analysis has two main phases. Phase 1 refers to the analysis of data on the ILO's Decent Work Results dashboard to identify reports on COVID-19. Phase 2 refers to the financial analysis of expenditures associated with the selected CPOs and GPs that reported on COVID-19 responses.

Phase 1 encompassed a series of screenings of the dashboard information, followed by tentative analytical strategies seeking to find and solve inconsistencies between planned and actual responses to the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>305</sup> The HLE found five categories of narratives:

- ▶ Narratives on **actions taken** to incorporate COVID into the work that was in progress, such as including COVID modules in OSH guides and trainings.
- ▶ Narratives on **adapting delivery**, such as trainings and meetings, to online formats because of COVID-19, without reference to responses to the impacts of the pandemic included in these activities.
- ▶ Narratives on **institutional flexibility** to attend to immediate needs, such as the distribution of protective equipment to staff and migrant workers to allow the continuation of ILO's work.
- ▶ Descriptions of **actions attributed to constituents** without clear reference on the role of the ILO to support or guide such actions. These cases were excluded from further analysis.
- ▶ References to **COVID as a challenge to delivery**, causing delays or cancellations, without descriptions of actions taken to respond to it. These cases were also excluded from further analysis.

<sup>305</sup> The complete database contains reports on results achieved by 585 CPOs and GPs with their respective outputs and indicators, totalling 875 entries. An analysis of the COVID-19 tag indicated that 370 of these entries were COVID-tagged (42 per cent). A text analysis of the two description boxes indicated that 493 entries contained the descriptors COVID\*, pandem\*, or coron\* (56 per cent). This signalled that there were more results achieved in responding to COVID-19 than planned. To make this finding more accurate, a content analysis of these narratives determined to what extent these descriptors referred to actual ILO's achievements.

The COVID-19 tag (corresponding to planning) was matched with these narratives and the HLE found mismatches between planning and reporting, with planned responses lacking reports on achievements, and achievements not previously planned. In the former case, interviews with field officers suggest that it may be too soon to see the results of some of the actions taken. In the latter, this may indicate that the dynamics of project implementation imposed unplanned adaptations that generated reportable results. However, the content analysis revealed that an additional explanation may be the emphasis on reporting against targeted results rather than on the work involved in achieving each target. The final database for the analysis of the effectiveness of the ILO's policy actions contains 375 entries (43 per cent of the original database), of which 247 are tagged as planned to respond to the pandemic (66 per cent of them).

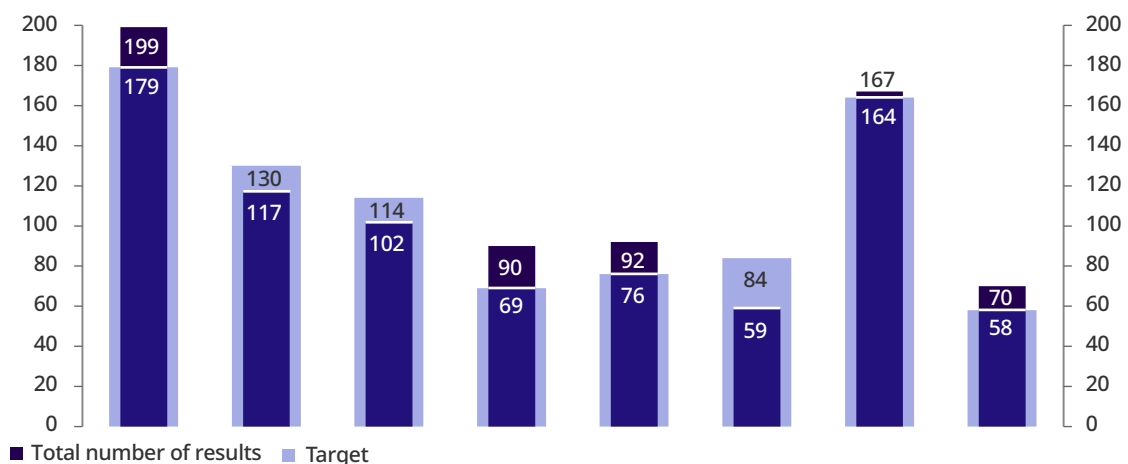
In **Phase 2**, 375 database entries were used as the basis for a 'follow the money' strategy to identify the expenditures associated with COVID-19 responsive actions. The XBDC-RBSA and RBTC databases were combined to sum the total expenditure for each reported achievement. Values tagged as COVID-19 tracking, mostly used to support the Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market,<sup>306</sup> were specifically identified. Financial information is available for 303 entries (81 per cent); the other 72 did not report expenditures during the period 2020–21 for the outcomes reporting responses to COVID-19.<sup>307</sup> See **ww** for the results of this analytical phase.

This database of achievements and financial information associated with responses to COVID was then used to generate analyses per policy outcome, region, country, gender responsiveness, and joint UN actions. It informed previous sections of this report in relation to the ILO's actions in each analytical pillar of this HLE. Details per region and policy outcome are in Annex X.

### Effectiveness and efficiency of the results reported

The PIR 2020–21 reports that ILO exceeded the target set for the biennium by 3 per cent, with the achievement of 896 results in 151 Member States and two territories across the eight policy outcomes. Under Outcome 1, related to increased institutional strength, resilience, service provision and capacity for advocacy of employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) and workers' organizations, results were 4 per cent over the target. Under Outcome 2, results were 10 per cent under the target for ratifications of international labour standards and progress in the establishment of tripartite mechanisms that allow constituents to effectively engage in the implementation of international labour standards. Under Outcome 1 (outputs 1.3 and 1.4), and outcomes 3–8, results were 5 per cent over the target. Figure 24 from PIR summarizes these results.

**FIGURE 24: TOTAL NUMBER OF RESULTS ACHIEVED AND TARGET BY POLICY OUTCOME, PIR 2020–21.**

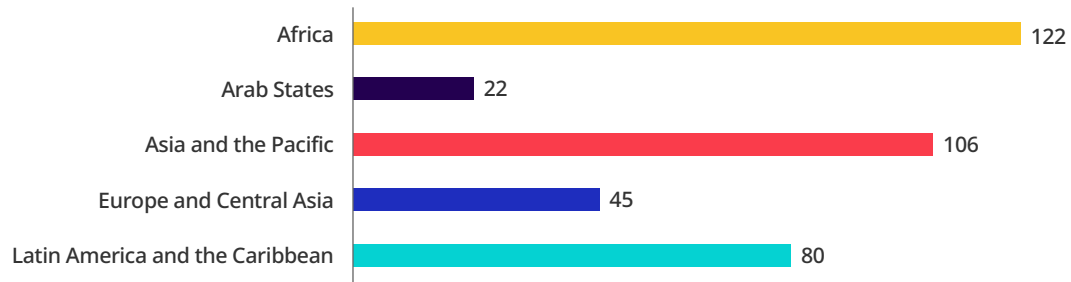


306 ILO, "Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market", Technical Brief, May, 2020.

307 A challenge to compile this information was the lack of a unique variable that allows the automatic merging of the financial and the reporting databases. Each data point was inserted by hand, individually, and double-checked later.

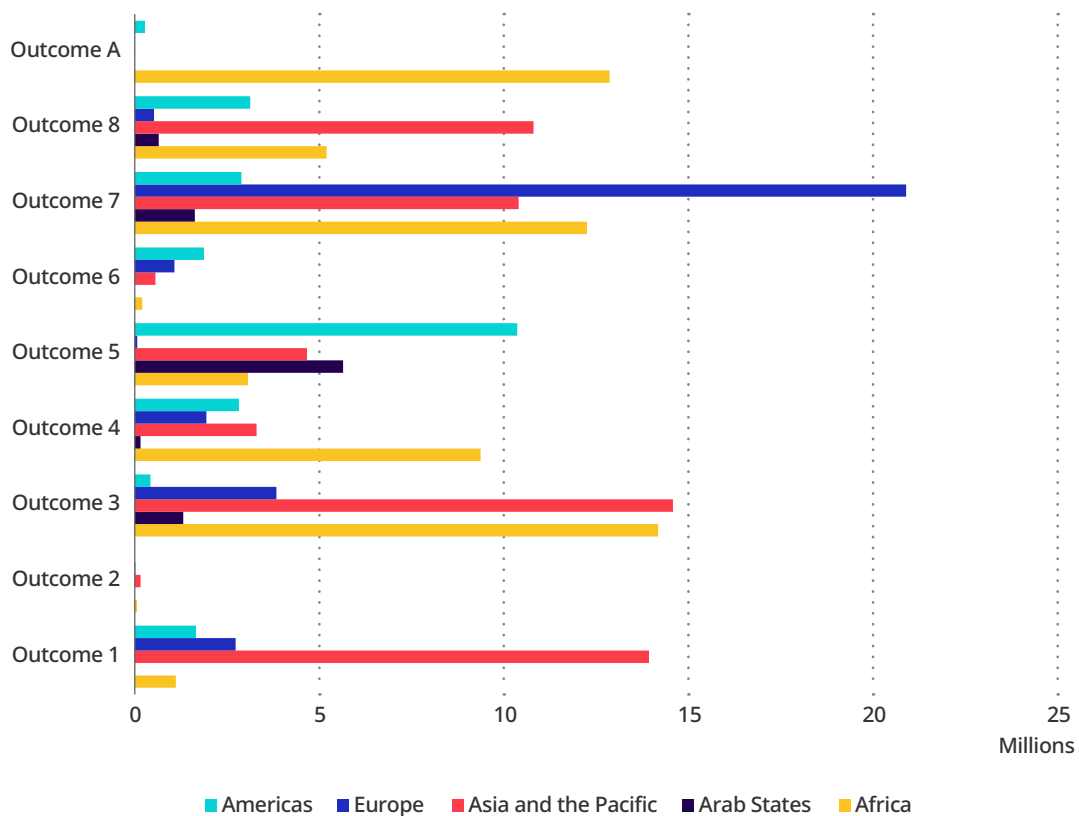
The HLE database of CPOs narrating achievements indicated that Africa and Asia and the Pacific regions were those with a highest number of CPOs responding to COVID-19, followed by the Americas, Europe and Central Asia, and the Arab States (Figure 25). It was not possible to compare these results with the targets per region.

**FIGURE 25: REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF CPOS WITH ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESPONDING TO COVID-19, 2020-21**



Results from HLE analysis depict largest expenditure figures on interventions reporting on the P&B (2020-21) Outcome 7 (Adequate and effective protection at work for all), with over US\$47 million, and Outcome 3 (Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all), with over US\$34 million. Figure 26 shows the total expenditures associated with COVID-19 responses per outcome and region.

**FIGURE 26: TOTAL EXPENDITURES ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 RESPONSES PER OUTCOME, PER REGION, 2020-21 (US\$)**





Overall results on the ILO's COVID-19 response actions by region (2020–21) illustrate largest expenditures in the Asia and the Pacific and Africa regions (each over US\$58 million), followed by Europe and Central Asia (US\$31.1 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (US\$23.4 million) and the Arab States (US\$9.4 million). Turkey, Timor-Leste, Egypt, Bangladesh and Colombia stand out as the countries with the largest ILO expenditure associated with actions responding to the COVID-19 immediate effects on the world of work (over US\$12 million each).

These are also the top five countries with expenditures responding to COVID-19 per gender mainstreaming actions. Activities in Turkey, for instance, included an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on women's employment within the policy brief on the impact of the pandemic on the labour market (TUR 152), and a report on the impact of COVID-19 on working conditions of domestic workers (TUR 155). In Timor-Leste, 20 per cent of the COVID-19 cash transfer programme under MPTF were allocated to female-headed households (TLS 901). In Egypt, Better Work conducted a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the Egyptian garment sector and provided capacity building on raising awareness and preventing infection by COVID-19 in Better Work factories (EGY 152).

The ILO COVID-19 response actions provided as a UN joint response are largely located in Nepal, Madagascar and Viet Nam. In Madagascar, for instance, the ILO supported the Ministry of National Education in project management, the implementation of the school infrastructure construction project using labour intensive methods in the construction of school buildings, classrooms with refectory, latrines, school furniture and capacity building of all partners in areas relating to works and maintenance, as part of a project with UNICEF and WFP. As part of a project with IFAD, the ILO supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in the implementation of a training project on labour-intensive approaches for SMEs and design offices in the rehabilitation of rural roads using the same approach. This has enabled the creation of 1,442 decent jobs and has contributed to local development through the use of local materials.

Concerning GPs, 31 out of 45 in the original database, reported achievements on COVID-19 responses (69 per cent). Most of them focused on social protection and OSH, and were linked to a flagship project, mostly on Building Social Protection Floors and Safety and Health for All. The focus of these GPs and countries involved is presented in **Table 3**. GP targeted actions in Asia and the Pacific (US\$5.0 million expenditure) and Africa regions (US\$2.5 million expenditure) linked mostly to outcomes 7 and 8 of P&B 2020–21. In **Cameroon**, for instance, ILO supported the government in drafting a national policy for health and social protection in August 2021. The final version of the document was approved by the national tripartite committee for OSH in October 2021. It includes the new challenges of the pandemic and the need to extend social protection to all institutions of the world of work. It also contains two capacity building modules on COVID-19 for the OSH committee and the labour inspectors. In **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, the GP included ILO's technical support to the government for the elaboration of the national social protection system through social dialogue with social partners and UN agencies. Activities included training and capacity building on social protection policy design and implementation, a partnership with UNICEF in a UN Joint Programme, the provision of financial and technical support for the purchase of IT equipment for the Ministry of Health and MOLSW, and the preparation of the UN Country team note "Developing a shock-responsive national social protection system to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in Lao PDR" presented to government with the Resident Coordinator's office.

**TABLE 3: FOCUS OF GLOBAL PRODUCTS THAT REPORTED RESPONSES TO COVID-19**

<b>Global product focus</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Flagship programme</b>
Social protection	Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia, , Peru, Senegal	Building Social Protection Floors for All
OSH	Bangladesh, Cameroon, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia,	Safety and Health for All
Protection of workers – other than OSH (ex., HIV prevention)		
International Labour Standards	Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Zambia,	Better Work
Gender equality and inclusion	Viet Nam	
Employment	Cote d'Ivoire	
Knowledge production	Sri Lanka	

## PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEYS

### Staff

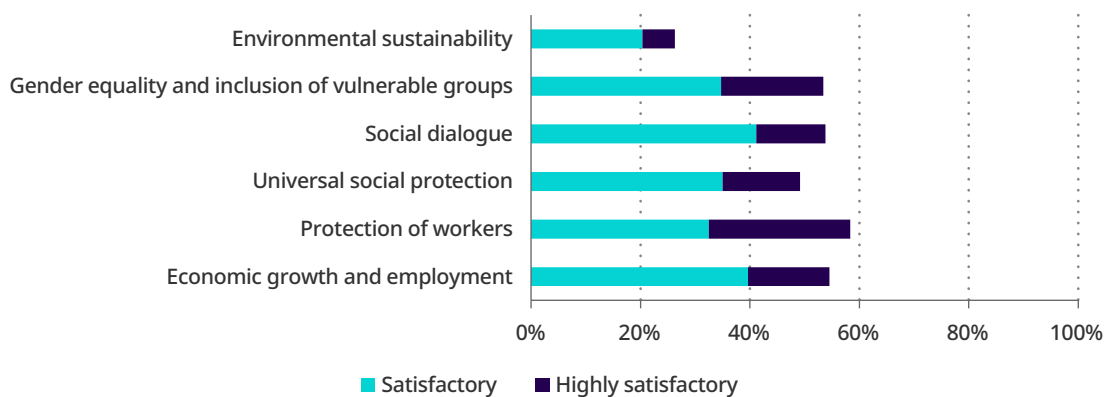
In terms of staff perceptions of the relevance, the HLE survey suggested the majority think the ILO is taking the necessary steps in designing and implementing recovery actions. Across all the main policy areas of the Call to Action (for example, Economic growth and employment, protection of all workers and universal social protection) an average of 75 per cent said that it was and just 8.2 per cent said it was not. Looking at some other dimensions, they were less sure about the ILO's work related to Just Transition (56 per cent said it was and 15 per cent said it was not) and its sectoral work (59 per cent said yes). In both these latter areas there was a high "don't know" figure suggesting that the specialist nature of these work areas means they are less well understood.

The relevance of the ILO's COVID-19 response to core standards and cross-cutting principles of the ILO's work were also rated highly by staff. Actions were judged by staff to have been framed in a way that promotes international labour standards in 85.5 per cent of cases; that includes actions that are gender responsive and support vulnerable groups in 80.5 per cent of cases; and that shape actions through social dialogue in 83.9 per cent of cases. Promoting synergies with other development partners received a somewhat lower rating of 67.4 per cent.

The internal coherence of and collaboration between different policy areas in responding to the crisis was given a fair rating by staff, with around three quarters of respondents giving a rating of 4, 5 or 6 out of 6 (for example, "somewhat coherent", "coherent" and "very coherent") but less than half giving a 5 or 6 out of 6 rating overall. Protection of all workers received the highest rating in this respect with 52.3 per cent giving the higher ratings.

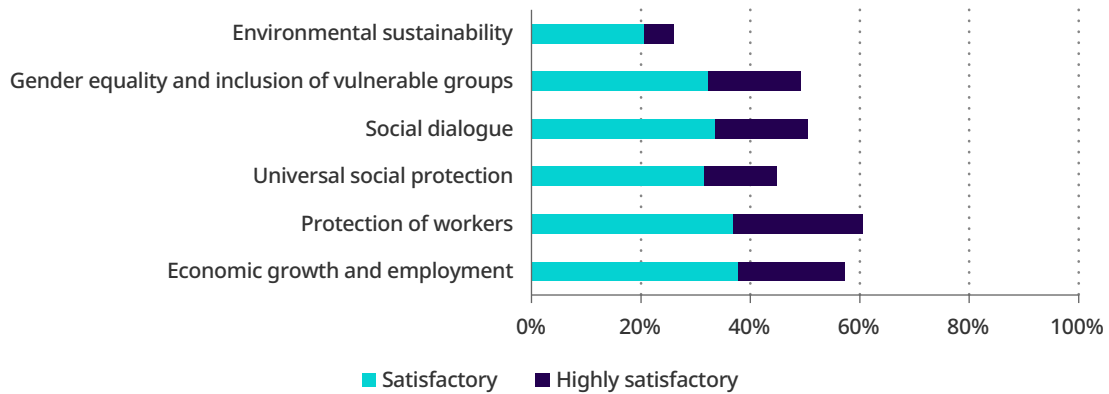
The survey asked staff to rate the effectiveness of the ILO's work in implementing projects and programmes in the context of COVID at country level. Across different policy domains, the ILO's work in the protection of workers received the highest rating (25.8 per cent "highly satisfactory") followed by gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups (18.6 per cent "highly satisfactory"). Only 5.9 per cent gave this rating to the ILO's work in environmental sustainability (see **Figure 27**.)

**FIGURE 27: EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES DURING COVID-19 BY POLICY DOMAIN – STAFF SURVEY**



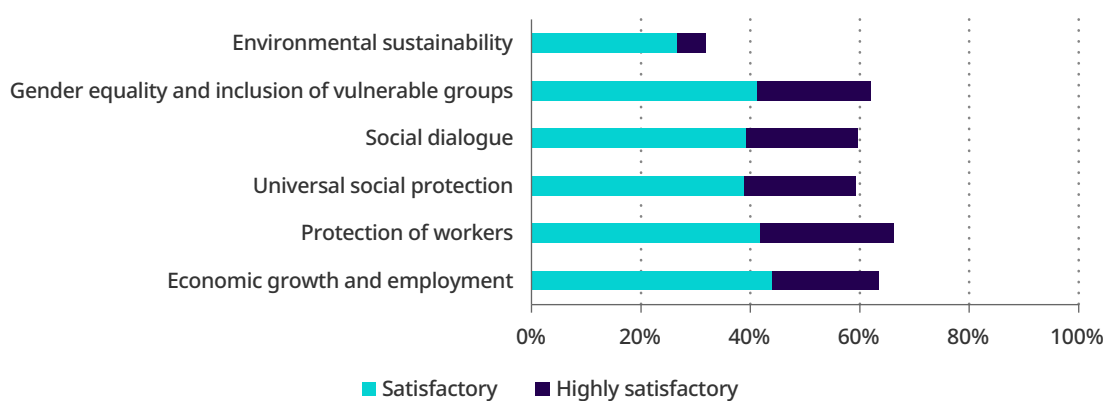
Staff were also asked to rate the ILO's work in supporting and strengthening the capacity of social partners during COVID in these policy areas with similar ratings given. See **Figure 28**.

**FIGURE 28: EFFECTIVENESS IN STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS DURING COVID-19 BY POLICY DOMAIN – STAFF SURVEY**



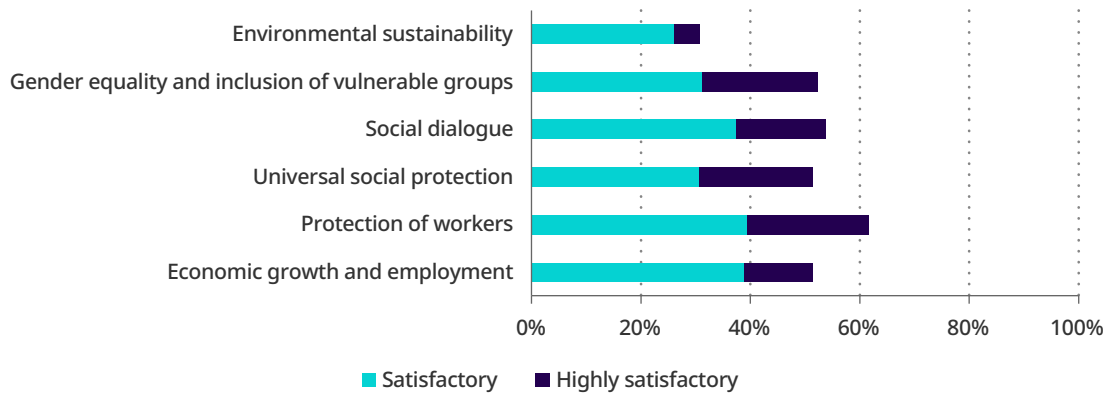
The effectiveness of the ILO's awareness raising and advocacy work across these domains was rated relatively higher compared with the above, with nearly all policy areas receiving "highly satisfactory" ratings from around a fifth of staff. Protection of workers again rated the highest and, consistent with other responses, environmental sustainability the lowest. (**Figure 29**)

**FIGURE 29: EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS RAISING AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19 BY POLICY DOMAIN – STAFF SURVEY**



The effectiveness of the ILO's work supporting legal and policy frameworks across these domains was again rated the highest in the area of protection of workers (with 22.3 per cent giving a highly satisfactory" rating). A high "don't know" response for environmental sustainability (22.2 per cent) and universal social protection (18.0 per cent) may have affected these ratings to some extent, though only 4.63 per cent were prepared to give environmental sustainability the highest rating while 20.7 per cent did for universal social protection. See **Figure 30**.

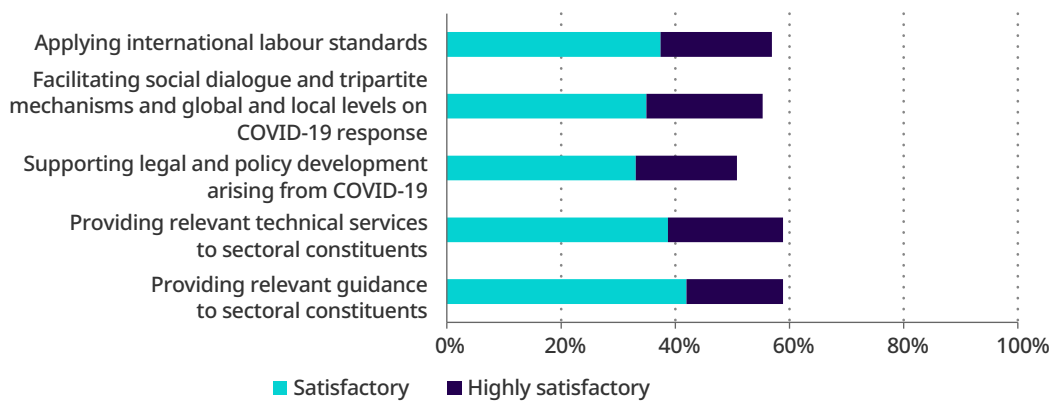
**FIGURE 30: EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORTING LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS DURING COVID-19 BY POLICY DOMAIN – STAFF SURVEY**



Across all policy domains, the effectiveness of the ILOs coordination of efforts with UN agencies and other partners was rated by staff as “satisfactory”. Only protection of workers (54.5 per cent) received high scores from more than half of respondents followed by universal social protection with 49.5 per cent. Environmental sustainability again received the lowest high scores at 38.7 per cent.

Looking at the sectoral aspects of the ILO’s COVID-19 response, staff gave the effectiveness of “providing relevant guidance to sectoral constituents” and “providing relevant technical services to sectoral constituents” the highest percentage of high scores (both 58.9 per cent for either “highly satisfactory” or “satisfactory”) followed closely by “applying international labour standards” (56.9 per cent) (see Figure 31).

**FIGURE 31: EFFECTIVENESS OF ILO’S SECTORAL WORK DURING COVID-19 – STAFF SURVEY**



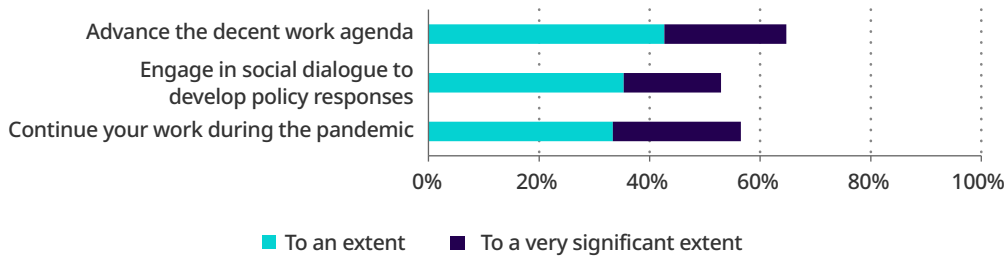
## Constituents

While the small and somewhat unbalanced sample size for the constituent survey requires caution in interpretation, the following responses were received that relate to the ILO's policy action during the pandemic:

On a 10-point scale, with zero denoting "not useful at all" and 10 denoting "extremely useful", on average, constituents rated the policy guides and tools prepared by the ILO at 7.2.

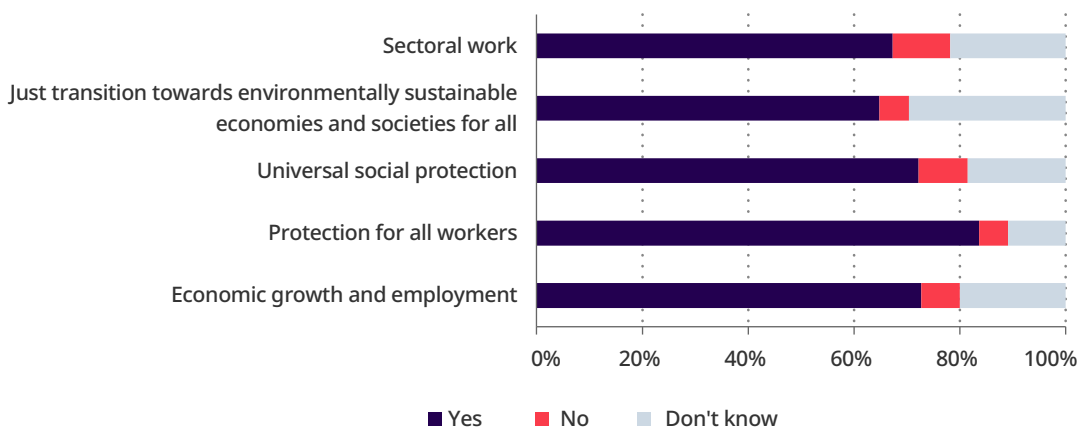
In terms of the ILO's work in strengthening their capacity, constituents gave high scores to "advancing the decent work agenda" (64.7 per cent high scores) and "engaging in social dialogue to develop policy responses" (52.9 per cent). More than 80 per cent of respondents gave a rating of 4/6 or higher (**Figure 32**).

**FIGURE 32: CONTRIBUTION TO CAPACITY STRENGTHENING – CONSTITUENT AND PARTNER SURVEY**



Excluding the high number of "don't know" responses to the question "do you think that the ILO is taking the necessary steps to design and implement recovery actions that are relevant to your needs" in key policy areas, a large majority of constituents said that it was. Results for the policy areas were: Protection of all workers (93.9 per cent), just transition (92.1 per cent), economic growth and employment (90.9 per cent), universal social protection (88.6 per cent), and sectoral work (86.0 per cent) (**Figure 33**.)

**FIGURE 33: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT RECOVERY ACTIONS – CONSTITUENT AND PARTNER SURVEY**



Constituents gave higher effectiveness ratings than ILO staff for COVID-related work in all policy areas – percentages of responses that were 5/6 or higher for each area were: protection of workers (constituents 67.3 per cent, staff 58.3 per cent); social dialogue (constituents 65.4 per cent, staff

53.8 per cent); universal social protection (constituents 56 per cent, staff 49.2 per cent); economic growth and employment (constituents 55.8 per cent, staff 54.5 per cent); gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups (constituents 54.9 per cent, staff 53.4 per cent); and environmental sustainability (constituents 44 per cent, staff 26.3 per cent).

Constituents also gave higher effectiveness ratings than ILO staff for all of the ILO's sectoral work related to COVID-19 – percentages of responses that were 5/6 or higher for each area were: "providing relevant guidance to sectoral constituents" (constituents 68.5 per cent, staff 58.9 per cent); "applying international labour standards" (constituents 68.5 per cent, staff 56.9 per cent); "providing technical services to sectoral constituents" (constituents 60.4 per cent, staff 58.9 per cent); "facilitating social dialogue and tripartite mechanisms" (constituents 60 per cent, staff 55.3 per cent); and "supporting legal and policy development arising from COVID-19" (constituents 51.9 per cent, staff 50.1 per cent).



# 05

- ▶ Key findings and conclusions by evaluation criteria



## ▶ Key findings and conclusions by evaluation criteria

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### NAVIGATING THE CRISIS

#### Introduction

This section summarizes the high-level findings of the evaluation against the OECD-DAC criteria and answers the evaluation questions (see Annex B: Evaluation questions). Ratings against the criteria use a six-point scale (with 1 being “highly unsatisfactory” and 6 being “highly satisfactory”). The ratings are based on the assessments of the five evaluation team members, the Synthesis Review of project evaluation reports completed in the period, and the findings of the staff and constituent surveys (see **Annex D: Results of staff and constituent surveys**). Ratings cover the ILO’s response at both the institutional and policy action levels.

#### Relevance

- ▶ **Key finding 1:** The ILO’s management and governance systems adapted well to changed circumstances, ensured that constituent engagement and support were maintained, and introduced new systems to allow staff to continue to work.
- ▶ **Key finding 2:** Coordination to develop policy guides and knowledge products was initially lacking but this was later addressed, and some guides and products proved to be of global relevance.
- ▶ **Key finding 3:** In the crisis phase, the ILO worked with its constituents to promote safety and health at the workplace, developed resources to support employment and enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in this work.

At the institutional level, the ILO’s overall response to the uncertainty and unpredictable change brought about by the crisis was highly relevant, enabling the Organization to adapt to a dramatically altered operational landscape, and to re-invent the way it delivered services to its constituents. Plans for risk management and business continuity had been in place, but these did not envisage a crisis of the magnitude and duration of COVID-19. The situation called for **management** to make quick decisions, often with imperfect information, and to adjust course as things became clearer. **Constituent engagement** through **social dialogue** remained the highest priority and continued throughout the crisis, including through virtual meetings and conferences. New systems and processes were introduced to ensure that ILO staff were safe and could continue to work in new ways or, sometimes, in new roles. The ILO gave relevant support to constituents as they grappled with the crisis, including addressing OSH issues, maintaining continuity of services for their members and enhancing their relevance through new tools and resources.

While there was no explicit ToC developed, the “four-pillar” policy framework set out a highly relevant **programme logic** sequenced initially to understand and to address the immediate effects of the pandemic on the world of work and then to contribute to human-centred recovery underpinned by social dialogue and international labour standards. As a tool to guide the HLE, the team developed a ToC retrospectively (see **Annex F: Theory of Change**) which divided the intervention logic into initial **crisis response actions** (designed to “**limit the damage**” by understanding and addressing the immediate needs and decent work deficits caused or exacerbated by the pandemic) and **recovery actions** (designed to “**build back better**”, using lessons learned in the pandemic to accelerate the achievement of the Decent Work Agenda).

Overall, ILO policy actions in the initial crisis response phase were highly relevant. While there was perhaps some over-enthusiasm in the generation of **knowledge products and policy guides** in the early stages of the pandemic, with some not being as relevant in terms of immediate constituent demand, this was brought under control and better coordinated. Some proved to be relevant at a global level, especially the *ILO Monitor* and the many sectoral and employment papers, while COVID OSH resources, and the guidelines produced to support countries to conduct rapid assessments of the pandemic impacts were applied extensively. As the synthesis review showed, **existing development cooperation projects** were generally able to remain relevant, especially those based on global programmes and interventions, which could more readily adjust delivery mechanisms and respond to new priorities rather than smaller, one-off projects which did what they could within their scope but lacked capacity to change direction in any significant way.

Actions in the crisis phase that more **directly supported people and enterprises** were also relevant: the ILO worked with its constituents to protect the safety and health of their members, including vulnerable groups, supported responsible business conduct in global supply chains such as the garment sector, developed resources to support enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Major contributions were made towards the goal of leaving no-one behind in the response by the major flagship programmes, such as Better Work and Safety and Health for All, enterprise programmes (including support for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives) as well as the migrant workers portfolio and integrated gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives. In some countries, COVID-19 response projects and social protection interventions supported employment and skills development for women, persons with disabilities, refugees, people living with HIV/AIDS and indigenous communities.

Despite elevating its profile within the UN System during the pandemic, **ILO contributions to the UN framework** for the immediate socioeconomic responses to COVID-19 were somewhat relevant but limited in scope at country level. The relevance of ILO action in support of a **green recovery and a Just Transition** was also seen as somewhat unsatisfactory, an observation reinforced in the November 2021 MOPAN assessment.

Evaluating the relevance of the ILO's recovery actions is complicated by a number of factors. First, at the time of writing, in many parts of the world, the pandemic was still in full swing with infection and hospitalization numbers still high or rising, lockdowns and travel restrictions still in place, and “recovery” in a sense yet to begin. Second, there is a huge variance in the rate of recovery between countries – while unemployment remains high in many parts of the world, in others, especially advanced economies, there has been a huge rebound in their labour markets leading to unprecedented labour shortages. Third, while the pandemic has naturally dominated policy thinking over the last two years, its impact on the world of work has since been compounded by multiple new crises including the war in Ukraine, a major energy crisis, escalating global inflation, global supply chain breakdowns, and, perhaps most worrying of all, a food supply crisis that raises the spectre of famine. Independent of these crises, there are changes in the labour market that are continuing to transform the ILO's operating environment, including shifts in the patterns of global production (for example, reshoring and near shoring), digitalization and automation of work and

the growth of artificial intelligence (AI). In the context of such change and multiple, unanticipated crises, the question arises whether the policy actions for recovery articulated in the four-pillar framework and the Call to Action will continue to be relevant?

Due to the way that response was developed, “anchored” as it was in the Centenary Declaration, ILS and the “core business” of the ILO, at a strategic level the response framework for recovery remains highly relevant and adaptable to these new global developments and to the divergent challenges at a country level. Having starkly exposed the consequences of existing decent work deficits, the pandemic appears to have galvanized global resolve to tackle many longstanding ILO goals, including universal social protection, protection of all workers, and inclusive economic growth and employment. This resolve seems unlikely to diminish in the face of the new crises though finances may be spread more thinly because of them.

Perhaps talk of “recovery” is itself an over-optimistic vision of what is attainable in the short- to medium-term. To be relevant in shaping the future of work, ILO actions will need to remain responsive to continuous, unpredictable change, not just to the damage left by the pandemic. Building back a better world of work is what the ILO was created to do in 1919. A new light has been shone on the relevance of this mission during COVID-19 and supported by its constituents, and the ILO must continue to assert the centrality of its role as the attention of the international community moves away from the pandemic and on to other global challenges.

## Coherence

- ▶ **Key finding 4:** The pandemic led to some improved collaboration and policy coherence in the ILO. Collaborative structures and multi-disciplinary work teams were established to good effect, with the “four-pillar” framework focusing effort and creating synergies.
- ▶ **Key finding 5:** Internal teamwork and more frequent engagement between HQ and the field were enhanced by the increased use of virtual meetings.
- ▶ **Key finding 6:** Work in the pandemic continued to cohere with social dialogue principles and with international labour standards.
- ▶ **Key finding 7:** New collaboration opportunities with UN agencies and multilateral partners have emerged but more work and resources are needed if their potential is to be realized. In the field, high-level agreements did not always translate to a more prominent role for the ILO.

Many past ILO evaluations have described the operational problems associated with a perceived “**silos mentality**” within the Organization. This has been said to manifest itself between and even within HQ policy departments and between HQ and the field. This is not a problem unique to the ILO and is common within large, multi-department organizations. Over the years, PROGRAM has tried to drive greater levels of collaboration and policy coherence in different ways<sup>308</sup> and a Business Process Review (BPR) also sought to break down the silos.

The HLE found evidence that the **pandemic played a catalytic role** in improving collaboration and policy coherence. The synthesis review of evaluations conducted in the period found that the pandemic had created a “new imperative for the ILO to work as one” and “led to strengthened internal collaboration”. There was a perception, also shared in some interviews, that when faced with a crisis, the ILO had some kind of inherent capacity to break out of its “silos” and to galvanise around a common cause. Examples were given of this crisis-induced esprit de corps, such as the huge collaborative effort across departments required to produce the *ILO Monitor* and to do the groundwork for the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection.

<sup>308</sup> For example, by introducing in 2015 “Areas of Critical Importance” around which work was intended to coalesce and by allowing results to be reported against multiple P&B outcomes.

While it is true that staff came together in a crisis, collaboration did not just spontaneously “break out” across the Organization. The **Organization’s leadership** set in place **collaborative structures and multi-disciplinary work teams** to create it (for example, for the *ILO Monitor*, on “Nowcasting”, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Uncoordinated production of policy papers and guides did happen (as one department director put it, “at the start it was almost a competition on who could produce the most briefs”) but this could have ballooned into an incoherent mass of work had the DG not called for a narrowing of focus around key objectives. These objectives would eventually become the four-pillar policy framework, something which helped people see more clearly where their work fitted in the “big picture” and where natural synergies might form.

Paradoxically, COVID’s **physical distancing may have also helped bring the ILO closer together**. Despite the risks of being involved in too many Zoom or team meetings, the massive increase in the use of such technology may have improved collaboration and communication within and between policy areas. Global Technical Teams, which bring together specialists from HQ and the field, used to meet physically and infrequently. The HLE learnt that during COVID, virtual meetings of some teams were held much more regularly to discuss global COVID impacts and to collectively develop responses. ENTERPRISES took this to the next level, organizing through ITCILO, a virtual “Sustainable Enterprises Exhibition” to “unlock synergies and scale effects” in the department’s work, and to develop a new high-level policy strategy. More frequent and responsive engagement between HQ specialists and staff and constituents in the field similarly improved organizational coherence, though it also had workload implications. Such benefits need to be maintained – as one department director said, “this should be the new normal – we should not go back to business as usual.”

Despite such promising developments in promoting policy coherence and internal collaboration, the walls of the silos have by no means crumbled. As the synthesis review found, there is a risk “of the ILO reverting to its old, more fragmented habits”. As one department director said, improvements in policy coherence could quickly be lost unless the ILO took action to build on and entrench collaboration. This meant setting up **structured mechanisms to encourage and reward cross-departmental interactions** and “more action from the policy heads and DDGs” to commit to this way of working.

Despite the many difficulties faced, especially in the early stages of the crisis, the ILO worked hard to ensure its institutional governance and its policy responses cohered with **social dialogue** principles. Remote engagement has its drawbacks – especially when rapport between the parties has not yet been established – but the HLE found that the ILO and its constituents remained closely engaged at a global level and, to varying degrees, also at a country level. Remote engagement also enhanced social dialogue and consultation in some new ways, including by allowing more direct engagement between HQ and key officials in ministries of labour.

In terms of alignment with ILO strategy and key policy instruments, as mentioned above, the ILO’s COVID response work was built on and cohered with the **Centenary Declaration** and, as such, also broadly aligned with the 2020–21 **P&B**. Actions at a country level broadly cohered with **CPOs and DWCPs** but, as these were not all updated to reflect the new circumstances brought on by COVID, and as reported results related to COVID were often only vaguely described, it was difficult for the HLE to determine how well actions cohered with other interventions at this level.

The **centrality of international labour standards** in the ILO’s COVID response was especially important – as one senior manager said, “COVID provided a window for the world to understand why labour standards are important”. The Call to Action emphasized the “promotion of legal and institutional frameworks based on international labour standards” and “occupational safety and health in the light of experience of the COVID-19 pandemic” (Paras. 12 and 13(b)(i)). The Report of

Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations<sup>309</sup> noted how the crisis exposed existing “blind spots” and stalled or reversed progress towards the SDG 8 vision of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.

The ILO was quick to link its work and its policy guidance to international labour standards, centrally positioning them as a “**decent work compass**” in the context of the crisis response, ensuring that actions reinforced key issues like OSH, protection of specific categories of workers, non-discrimination, social security and employment protection. Standards related to employment, social protection, wage protection, SMEs and workplace cooperation all shaped policy measures that promoted a human centred approach to the crisis and recovery. Notable examples included the ILO’s work to update the **Maritime Labour Convention** in response to the crisis faced by workers in that sector during the pandemic, the COVID-related work linked to the **health services and tourism sectors**, and the addition of OSH as a fifth category of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

New mechanisms for **coherence and collaboration with other UN agencies and multilateral partners** emerged during the pandemic which promise much but still require substantial work, and many more resources, to realize major benefits. High-level agreements and collaborative mechanisms were established in the UN system but, for a variety of reasons, at the country level, the ILO was not always able to play as prominent a role as it would like even if it was the logical and mandated agency to do so. Its relative lack of resources at a country level, particularly in non-resident countries, was reported to restrict the scope of its activities in this area.

The HLE found that recovery from the pandemic presents new opportunities for real action on **Green Jobs and Just Transition**, but there is a gap between stated aspirations and action. Project evaluations and MOPAN’s November 2021 assessment suggest that ILO actions are yet to fully align with its policy commitments. As one survey respondent put it: “Just Transition and environmental sustainability is mentioned in most programmes of the ILO, but unfortunately unless [they] specifically have them as their objective, it’s often lip service.” Another suggested as a means of improving policy coherence “maybe we need a Just Transition Task Force with all relevant departments”.

## Effectiveness

- ▶ **Key finding 8:** ILO planning and reporting systems did not adequately track its COVID-19 response. Adjustments were made to these systems, but results were poorly reported.
- ▶ **Key finding 9:** Innovative knowledge products were cited as being highly influential and elevated the ILO’s profile as an authoritative source of labour market data.
- ▶ **Key finding 10:** Good results were identified across all the key policy areas in supporting both national policy development and programmes and measures to address the immediate impacts of the crisis.

The ILO was only partially successful in adapting its operational planning and reporting systems to track its COVID-19 response and to measure its effectiveness. Setting aside the broader question of whether its RBM system measures the right things in general (for example, the observation shared with the HLE that “spending on delivery is not a good measure of effectiveness”), making sense of P&B performance reports in their coverage of the COVID-19 response was especially challenging. Some adjustments were made at the planning stage to some CPOs (about a third according to PROGRAM), but the nature and intent of these changes were not visible through the Decent Work Results dashboard. The HLE therefore found itself in the invidious position of evaluating the effectiveness of actions without always knowing exactly what these actions were expected to achieve.

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309 ILO, “[Press Release on the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations](#)”, February 2022.

The HLE completed an arduous, line-by-line review of CPO reports and extracted what it could to tell a performance story on the COVID response, but a certain amount of subjectivity was involved in this, and important details might have been lost. In some areas, the HLE delved deeper into P&B outputs to identify connections between elements of the Call to Action and the reported results. But even with the tracking adjustments made to the monitoring and reporting system (that is, the addition of a COVID-19 “tag” at the planning stage and an optional explanatory text box at the reporting stage), data were found to be imprecise or poorly reported. For example, some rapporteurs used the text box to explain the link between CPO results and the ILO's COVID-19 response, but others used it to describe general contextual information about COVID-19 or simply left it blank. There were also probably many examples of effective ILO COVID-19-response actions which, for whatever reason, were not attached to a reported CPO result and so remained invisible.

While there were clear deficiencies in the ILO's monitoring and reporting of its COVID-19 response, it should be remembered that decisions related to adapting systems were made in an environment of great operational uncertainty. Maybe, if people knew in early 2020 that the pandemic would last for years, a more comprehensive overhaul of planning and reporting might have been triggered. Some interviewees said that, in retrospect, all CPOs should have been revised (as was the case with global deliverables). Some alluded to heated discussions at the time about important definitional issues – like how, exactly, the ILO should define a COVID response in planning and reporting terms, whether immediate or long-term responses should be the focus, and whether any of the actions within the four-pillar framework and the Call to Action were, in any real sense, new.

In the end, the ILO decided to maintain its existing approach, adding some minor tweaks to planning and reporting to capture some COVID-19-related detail, but largely reporting as usual on P&B outcomes and outputs. Qualitative reporting of the ILO's pandemic response, both within the PIR and in papers presented to the GB, showcased highlights of the ILO's work, but said little, if anything, about “lowlights” – aspects of this work that were ineffective. Such deficiencies were acknowledged by staff interviewed during the HLE, but as one said, the important question relates to if and how it might modify its approach if challenged to measure something unexpected again: “How ready are we next time?”

[Evaluation procedures](#) were updated, and [protocols produced](#) to ensure continued accountability and learning from evaluations. Three iterations of targeted synthesis reviews were produced to provide real-time learning on the effectiveness of ILO's operations in response to the pandemic effects.

The ILO made great efforts to support workers' and employers' organizations to continue to operate and service their members during the crisis. Constituents in HLE case study countries were positive about the effectiveness of these efforts, highlighting, for example, the value of information shared on international practices, guides for members on OSH, telework, and online payments, and support for improved policy advocacy and the maintenance of social dialogue.

Despite these limitations, the HLE found examples of effective policy actions both at a global level and within the country and thematic case studies. Developing **knowledge products** was a major focus of the ILO's response in the early stages of the pandemic but measuring the effectiveness of these is difficult. **Some were highly innovative and influential** while others may have only reached a limited audience. Knowledge output elevated the ILO's profile as an authoritative source of labour market data and the ILO's outreach, public engagement, and media coverage grew substantially as a result.

Work in support of inclusive economic growth and employment enabled the effects of the pandemic on national labour markets to be better understood with insights incorporated into national employment policies and programmes, youth employment strategies, enterprise support measures, sectoral responses, skills systems and supports for vulnerable groups. Work supporting

the protection of all workers helped constituents to implement their immediate COVID-19 OSH response, including in the most affected sectors and occupations, to tackle the negative effect of the pandemic on FPRW, on informality, and on women and vulnerable workers. Universal social protection was given new prominence and the ILO used its policy expertise to support new coverage in several countries (including for vulnerable groups and women) and to position the ILO with IFIs and the UN system to further expand this work. Within the UN and multilateral system, collaborative project efforts had mixed results, but the ILO has forged new agreements and partnerships that could enhance results over the long term.

According to the synthesis review, the effectiveness of **existing development cooperation projects** in the early stages of the pandemic was affected by implementation delays and the many were unable to implement activities as planned. Despite this, many showed a **good capacity to innovate** work around these obstacles using technology, although **reaching vulnerable groups** in this way sometimes proved difficult. **Many achieved good results**, especially those that focused on protecting workers, although interventions designed to grow jobs and income were less effective at the height of the pandemic.

## Efficiency

- ▶ **Key finding 11:** ILO quickly reinvented its service delivery model, achieving efficiencies of scale in supporting constituents as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies.
- ▶ **Key finding 12:** Budget flexibility allowed adaptations while maintaining accountability and funding partners were open to project adjustments. Some inefficiencies were reported in the slow mobilization of resources, including human resources.
- ▶ **Key finding 13:** Major programmes (such as the Better Work flagship programme and the SCORE programme) were generally better able to make delivery adjustments than smaller, one-off projects.

In response to unprecedented circumstances, ILO managed the crisis in an efficient and timely way, quickly re-inventing its service delivery model, defining a coherent policy framework, and asserting its position as a global authority on the pandemic's effects on the world work. By necessity, the digitization of its services was accelerated, enabling the ILO to achieve efficiencies of scale in the delivery of constituent support as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies through remote engagement and less travel. New intervention models were introduced that streamlined support to constituents (for example, the development of customisable global products which EBMOs could adapt for local use). The right balance between face-to-face and remote servicing will need to be struck as pandemic restrictions ease, but it was generally agreed that the ILO would not return to its pre-COVID-19 mode of operation. The ILO's human resource management response played a vital role in ensuring business continuity although delays in staff mobilization were sometimes raised by staff and constituents as an obstacle to a timely response.

Similarly, at the governance level, the ILO was able to adapt its long-established mechanisms for decision-making and constituent engagement and achieved some new efficiencies in the process that could be continued (for example, allowing some GB issues to be resolved "by correspondence" if all parties agreed, thereby devoting more time to the face-to-face meetings to more critical or contentious governance issues). Other engagement with constituents, including at the ILC, was also efficiently maintained although some countries reported difficulties in connecting to people who lacked internet bandwidth or technology skills. More direct and improved links with some key constituent representatives were also reported (for example, engaging directly with ministry of labour policy specialists via technology).

The ILO established procedures to support budget flexibility while still maintaining accountability. With development cooperation funds, the ILO quickly reached out to its funding partners to brief them on the situations faced in the field and to discuss how projects might be adapted. Project staff in countries were not always able to adapt their projects to their new circumstances as fully as they would have liked, but they were generally able to adjust delivery modes and some outputs efficiently and to reasonable effect. The ILO was also able to mobilize new voluntary contributions from development partners to respond in a timely way to the emerging needs of constituents and to address the challenges of the pandemic.

Despite the impressive output of the Organization in its response to COVID-19 across multiple policy areas, the HLE was unable to accurately evaluate its cost effectiveness. The team's financial analysis identified a total expenditure of over US\$180 million in 2020–21 on COVID-related policy actions but this figure includes broader activities in CPOs and GPs that do not relate to COVID at all. According to a senior ILO staff member, despite efforts at HQ to develop indicators or data to accurately locate responses to the COVID-19 crisis within specific outcomes or outputs "it is difficult to say how much was for immediate responses and recovery, how much money went for what. Theoretically, it would be good, but not practically possible."

### Impact and sustainability

- ▶ **Key finding 14:** Although it will take more time for the impacts of the ILO's COVID response work to be fully revealed, the Organization took advantage of the renewed impetus for reform in some key policy areas to rapidly advance its agenda – the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is one example.
- ▶ **Key finding 15:** The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions could also have transformative impacts, but these will depend on strong partnerships and will require substantial financing.
- ▶ **Key finding 16:** Openness to the adaptive management approach used during the pandemic needs to be maintained, especially – but not exclusively – in crisis situations.

Measuring the impact and sustainability of the ILO's policy actions will require more time and commitment. However, having received a "wake-up call" on aspects of the Decent Work Agenda, many countries are now more alert to the need for action. Progress towards impacts is already evident in some areas, where the pandemic has given further emphasis to ongoing ILO advocacy efforts. A prime example is the addition, at the 110th Session of the ILC, of safe and healthy working environments as a fifth category of rights in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

There is also a new impetus for cooperation between the ILO and other UN agencies, multilateral partners and IFIs that could allow the reach and scale of ILO's efforts in these areas to be extended. The February 2022 Global Forum for a human-centred recovery added to this. ILO has conducted substantial groundwork for the Global Accelerator, which may have huge impacts on the development of social protection systems and employment. But it is still very early days and, given resource constraints and continuing collaboration barriers, these impacts may not materialize. As so far seen in some policy areas, such as ensuring a Just Transition, there can be a gap between stated policy goals and what is ultimately delivered on the ground.

At an institutional level, the ILO has emerged from the initial crisis phase of the pandemic with experience in radically adapting its operations in quick time. While the ILO has since faced and is facing multiple new crises, the transferability of this experience is never certain as every major disruption brings its own unique challenges. Future risk management and business continuity plans will no doubt include important lessons learned from COVID-19, but they will only ever




be a guide. During COVID-19, ILO senior management faced a situation where uncertainty and confusion were everywhere, and there was no checklist that could be used that would make things any clearer.

The situation demanded agility, flexibility and a willingness to continuously assess the situation and make decisions, sometimes without all the information available. Reinforcing the importance and wisdom of this adaptive approach to crisis management can be considered a key impact for the ILO at an organizational level. Such an approach was by no means guaranteed and a more conservative “wait and see” response might easily have been adopted exactly at the time when the ILO needed to step forward. The next crisis will always be different, but the ILO needs to sustain its crisis management response. As one department director said: “We can be sure there are more crises to come and we need to ensure we have an adaptive management approach in place that sets out how we operate. We were lucky to have good leadership, but we need to formalise this approach. We need a statement of ‘this is what we do’ and not just hope for the best.”

Improved monitoring of impacts over time will be needed, though as has been explained above, deficiencies in even the short-term monitoring of the ILO's COVID-19 response will complicate this. At best, perhaps, the ILO might be able to identify how the pandemic triggered a new imperative for renewed policy actions and the work done by the ILO during the pandemic can be viewed as important groundwork. More broadly, as 2020–21 Programme Implementation Report pointed out:

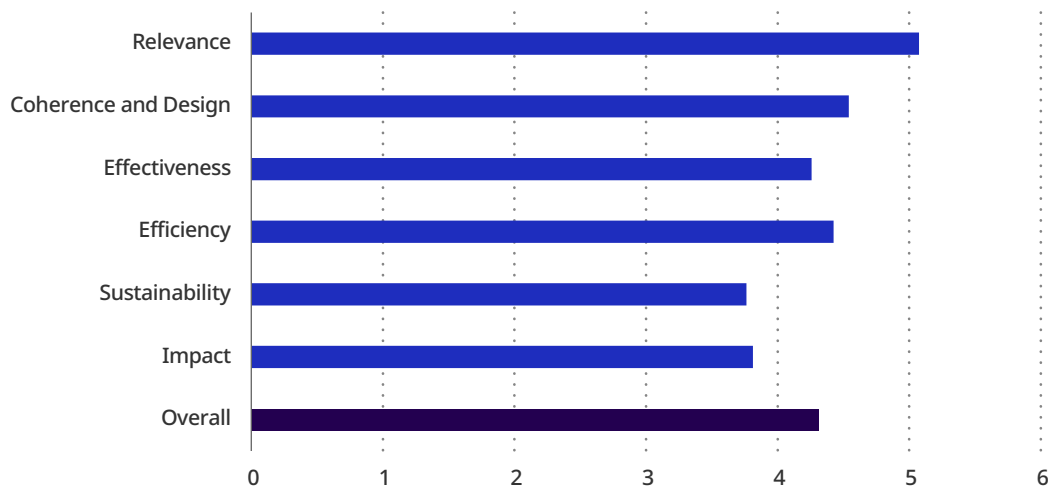
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 **The Organization must keep track more precisely of the work it delivers and must do better at capturing its impact, including on end beneficiaries, while recognizing that outcomes at national level cannot be attributed solely to the ILO's contribution. This also calls for more robust monitoring on a longer timescale, not only in terms of the effects of specific ILO interventions, but also in terms of the ILO's work in given contexts over longer periods. In turn, this may imply conceiving of certain core ILO activities, such as capacity building, as longer-term endeavours. It may also involve rethinking the timescale on which the ILO can most effectively deploy the monitoring and evaluation tools at its disposal. Ultimately, it requires recognition by ILO constituents that the Organization's work, in some contexts, tends to bear fruit over multiple years” (p.81)**

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### Overall assessment

**FIGURE 34: PERFORMANCE BY EVALUATION CRITERION: 2020-2021 ILO'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



### Lessons

- ▶ New work practices can enhance HQ interaction with the field and its understanding of the lived experience of constituents and programme beneficiaries. This can lead to a more practical and less academic approach, improving relevance, effectiveness and potential impact.
- ▶ The pandemic forced ILO to produce agile and innovative responses in its service delivery. Now, the Organization is better placed to encourage a culture of continuous improvement that follows this approach.
- ▶ The crisis response showed that leadership and putting in place the right collaborative structures can improve organizational coherence and break down silos. The leaps taken in the ILO's technological capacity can facilitate this.
- ▶ Digital delivery of ILO services offers opportunity to expand reach and scale, but there is a digital divide, especially in low-income countries, and the accessibility of these services needs to be considered.
- ▶ The monitoring and reporting of crisis response actions which by nature are conceived and implemented quickly and outside normal planning timeframes need to be improved.
- ▶ The pandemic will have an enduring effect on the ILO's service delivery approach, reducing travel and allowing engagement with constituents more regularly and directly online. However, in-person missions still bring many benefits in addition to those achieved by online contacts.
- ▶ Before the pandemic, OSH was mainly associated with industrial safety and hygiene such as the prevention of occupational accidents. The pandemic has highlighted additional dimensions, such as mental health in the workplace, which have not received sufficient attention.



# 06

## ► Recommendations


## ▶ Recommendations

### INSTITUTIONAL

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

Continue to strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective global, regional and national post-pandemic recovery policies and actions.


Adjust the ILO Institutional Capacity Development Strategy to meet the needs of the constituents in a post-pandemic world, ensuring that the constituents are as well equipped as possible to develop policy responses and to offer innovative services related to the trends accelerated by COVID-19. Emphasis could be placed, for example on: formalizing the use of digital tools; developing teleworking policies and guides (including to build capacity to influence legislation and to engage in collective bargaining on this subject); developing crisis and risk management systems; protecting and enhancing employment opportunities for vulnerable groups; strengthening the economic case for employment-rich investments, particularly in the care, digital and green economies; sectoral recovery actions; improving productivity and promoting innovation in enterprises; and curbing the spread of informality. The Office should seek the right balance between online and face-to-face approaches to capacity-building by assessing their comparative impacts and barriers to digital training.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Deputy Director-General for Field Operations (DDG/FOP), Bureau for Workers' Activities, Bureau for Employers' Activities, DDG/P, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), Turin Centre		Short-term	Medium

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy encompassing both headquarters and the field.


In addition to the ILO's current risk management and business continuity plans, use the experience accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy to deal with any future global calamity that might have far-reaching and sustained impacts on service delivery. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of adaptive management principles and the possible need to temporarily step away from established procedures (and associated risks) and devise a resource mobilization plan (including human resources) or strategy for crisis situations to facilitate a rapid response to country offices and national constituents in crises. The ILO should also urge regional and country offices to review and adjust their existing business continuity and contingency plans in the light of the lessons drawn at the local level regarding responsiveness to the COVID-19 crisis, which was uneven.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, DDG/MR, Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Treasurer and Financial Comptroller		Short-term	High

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Expand and mainstream more broadly the approach to cross-departmental teamwork demonstrated in the pandemic and continue the efficient and effective management and governance practices that were introduced.


Building on the successful collaboration models introduced during the pandemic, establish more structured mechanisms, driven by the Director-General and senior management, to drive policy coherence and organizational synergy (such as cross-departmental work teams and more frequent and structured interactions between policy portfolio directors and regional directors). The ILO should also nurture Global Technical Teams as communities of practice and mutual support. This focus on policy coherence would align with the institutional guidelines on the next programme and budget. More broadly, the ILO should review any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness that flowed from management and governance arrangements introduced during the pandemic, with a view to formalizing their ongoing application post-pandemic.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Senior Management Team, PROGRAM		Short-term	Medium

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Enhance the ILO's capacity to monitor, report and evaluate crisis response actions that are developed and implemented outside the normal programming cycle.

In the context of tracking the progress of human-centred recovery, the Governing Body has stressed the need for "evidence-based assessments of the quantity, quality and social inclusivity of the recovery at the country level and to examine how the recovery strategies can be improved". However, this high-level evaluation found the ILO's tracking of its own COVID 19 response actions to be lacking. The ILO needs to develop a process to adequately adjust plans when operational circumstances have been severely disrupted (for example, by revising the theory of change, taking major disruptive risks into consideration). Reporting needs to clearly describe actions and their effects to respond immediately and to envision recovery or structural change. Evaluation processes and their funding also need to better capture the impact of crisis recovery actions by adopting a longer-term approach that allows assessments to be made two or three years down the road, not just at the conclusion of projects.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, DDG/FOP, PROGRAM, PARDEV, Research Department, EVAL		Medium-term	Medium

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to respond to systemic crises through universal social protection.**

The Governing Body should re-emphasize the leadership role of the ILO in ensuring universal social protection in the light of current and future crises, and support Member States in implementing the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). This can be done, among other things, by building capacities to prepare and respond to systemic crises and shocks through social protection measures that target, inter alia, vulnerable groups and the informal sector. The Office should clarify how the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All will contribute to adapting social protection systems to new and emerging challenges. It should also provide details of the strategic position and modalities under which it should offer at least the basic guarantees of income and health protection to all, including women and vulnerable groups.

The ILO should clarify its role in emergency situations in this area and consider the importance of having a seat at the table when a crisis strikes. The ILO's unique comparative advantages should be promoted by UN resident coordinators and the ILO should collaborate with UN partners and international financial institutions to shape a common understanding and vision of shock-responsive social protection systems in interventions that are systemic and catalytic. The ILO should continue to ensure strong leadership in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, including by: contributing to the mobilization of target resources; leveraging its networks of constituents, the UN system and partners through international social protection platforms such as the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board; and strengthening partnerships with international financial institutions and ministries of finance.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Social Protection Department (SOCPRO), DDG/P, DWTs and country offices (COs), DDG/FOP		Long-term	Medium

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

Continue to strengthen the constituents’ capacities to sustain international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work for workers, even during a crisis, and develop inclusive, gender-responsive policies for the protection of workers in insecure forms of work.

The impact of the crisis on health and care workers, and transnational workers in the transport and maritime industries, exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in these highly exposed sectors. Together with its social partners, the ILO should work with Member States to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies that are applicable at all times, especially during crises, that are rights-based and intersectional to protect key workers.


Responding to the urgent need to provide protection for emerging diverse forms of work, the ILO needs to accelerate support for gender-responsive national legislation and labour administration systems in respect of the protection of wages, working time, care responsibilities, safety and health, the elimination of violence and harassment, and inclusive access to social protection. The ILO should work with other development partners at the global and national levels to address decent work deficits, paying special attention to those made particularly vulnerable by the crisis.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), Sectoral Policies Department, Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), SOCPRO, COs, Conditions of Work and Equality Department, DDG/P		Medium-to-long-term	Medium

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

The ILO should more clearly integrate a just transition into its post-pandemic employment and skills development strategies and actions, and use its experience and expertise to implement approaches with maximum potential for impact. It should pursue financing and delivery partnerships with organizations with resources to help bring a just transition to scale.

A just transition needs to be incorporated into a broader range of the ILO's employment and skills development strategies and actions in the post-pandemic recovery (including for young people, women and vulnerable groups). While the high-level agreements, transition guidelines, manuals and training courses already devised are all necessary, they are far from sufficient. Countries considering just transition processes have found that the ILO has committed very few resources in this area, and that available staff would be insufficient to support the complex social dialogue necessary to generate support for radical change. The surveys conducted as part of the high-level evaluation found that there was a strong perception that the ILO was underperforming in this important area. In the absence of sufficient ILO presence in-country, it is considered likely that other agencies will enter the process, but with limited perspective, no tripartite mandate and inadequate experience.


Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, ENTERPRISES, Employment Policy Department, GOVERNANCE, Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS), SOCPRO		Long-term	High

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

The ILO should review its current capacity to deliver on the whole-of-government approach and new models of development financing, focusing on the scale and distribution of workload implied by its agreements as part of the UN COVID-19 response (including with both UN and other multilateral organizations), and devise a prioritized and specific plan to meet the resource requirements, including at the country level.

Calls for new models and higher levels of development financing have highlighted the ILO's relatively limited capacity in this field, particularly with international development banks and funds. The UN Secretary-General has emphasized the need to move forward with whole-of-government approaches, not just engaging ministries covering social, labour and environmental areas but ensuring that ministries of finance are fully engaged in the recovery process as well. To achieve these ambitious goals, the ILO will need greater financing expertise.

Furthermore, the ILO currently lacks the human resources to manage the workload associated with its many new cooperation agreements and partnerships, especially at the country level. If these agreements are to deliver on the bold development results projected, the ILO will need to scale up its operations and presence, particularly at the country level. It appears unlikely that this can be achieved efficiently through the widespread use of short-term contract staff or consultancies.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MULTILATERALS, PARDEV, PROGRAM, DDG/P, DDG/FOP, Human Resources Development Department (HRD)		Medium-to-long-term	High





07

▶ Office response

## ▶ Office response

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### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

The Office takes note of the recommendation. The existing ILO Institutional Capacity Development Strategy encompasses the means of action suggested by the evaluation. A whole-of-Office approach will be applied in order to continue working to strengthen the organizational, technical and institutional capacity of the tripartite constituents in line with this strategy and based on their needs, and in line with the commitments established in the programme and budget and other relevant strategies, including the Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

The Office welcomes the recommendation and plans to explore how it can organize its resources (human and financial) to rapidly respond to crisis situations and build an institutional high-level response management system, with a permanent oversight body that will have the capacity to deal with both global and national crises. It will be comprehensive and include both headquarters and field-level staff, and cover operational as well as policy and programmatic issues, directing its attention to crisis preparedness, response and recovery support for the tripartite constituents.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

The Office welcomes the recommendation. Work has started on developing policy coherence across technical and thematic areas in view of the elaboration in process of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25. The Office plans to review existing global institutional mechanisms such as the Global Technical Teams in order to optimize internal governance in view of relevance and efficiency.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

The Office welcomes this recommendation. The Programme and Budget for 2022–23 was designed as a comprehensive framework for a human-centred recovery from the pandemic. Building on the implementation of the programme during the current biennium, the ILO will explore mechanisms to further improve the adaptive programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of actions undertaken to respond to sudden crises that disrupt regular operations, to be included in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

The Office welcomes the recommendation, which is aligned with the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021). The Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All includes a thematic area on the adaptation of social protection systems to new and emerging challenges, which will: frame the further development of knowledge on the application of the Recommendation No. 202 in emergency contexts; provide technical assistance to the constituents to implement Recommendation No. 205; and facilitate the ILO's engagement with partners, including those in the UN system and international financial institutions.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

The Office welcomes this recommendation, pointing to the importance of raising awareness among government ministries of international labour standards, including through UN country teams and ILO flagship programmes, and noting that the response required is beyond the sole remit of ministries of labour. The Office will continue to work with the ILO's constituents and relevant line ministries, as well as with various agencies and networks in the multilateral system, using mechanisms such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the Equal Pay International Coalition, to build universal social protection systems and enhance investments in care infrastructures and services to improve the working conditions of vulnerable workers in the informal economy and provide guidance on labour and social protection for platform workers. The Office will strengthen the application of relevant international labour standards and other sector-specific standards, guidelines and tools, in particular in key sectors such as the education, health, maritime and transport sectors.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

The Office welcomes the recommendation to increase ILO country-level and operational support on a just transition for enterprises, workers and communities. The ILO has the mandate, policy frameworks and tools and approaches to support countries considering just transition policies, measures and processes leading to the creation of decent work, in particular youth employment. The ILO will increase its internal capacity and keep expanding partnerships with other UN agencies, regional development banks and local entities, and leverage further climate financing through the Green Climate Fund to achieve greater impact.

## RECOMMENDATION 8

The Office takes note of this recommendation and will consider it as an input for the development of a Global Social Justice Coalition, in the implementation of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, and in the formulation of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25.

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# Annexes



## ► Annex A: Interviews

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Abidjan	Samuel-Olonjuwon	Cynthia	F	Director, RO Africa	ILO
Argentina	Brandi	Laila	F	Jefa de Gabinete	Secretaría de Empleo
Argentina	Cicciaro	Javier	M	National Programme Coordinator - Iniciativa Spotlight para la reducción del femicidio y eliminación de la violencia contra las mujeres y niñas en Argentina	ILO
Argentina	Etorena	Joaquín	M	National Project Coordinator - Iniciativa Page: Alianza para la Acción hacia una economía verde	ILO
Argentina	Figueroa	María Eugenia	F	National Project Coordinator - Offside: Marcando la cancha! Mejorando las capacidades de los actores del mundo del trabajo y de la agricultura para abordar el trabajo infantil en áreas agrícolas en Argentina.	ILO
Argentina	Jerkovic	Dolores	F	National Programme Officer	ILO
Argentina	Larisgoitia	Andres	M	Secretario de relaciones internacionales CTA	
Argentina	Lavena	Cecilia	F	Project Officer - Proyecto Políticas Económicas para acelerar la igualdad de género en Argentina (OSF)	ILO
Argentina	Lopez	Elva	F	OIC, Officer in Inclusive Labour Market Institutions	ILO
Argentina	Perrot	Bárbara	F	National Project Coordinator Promoción de empleos de calidad, productivos, sostenibles e inclusivos	ILO
Argentina	Schleser	Diego	M	Subsecretario/a Lic.	Subsecretaría de Planificación, Estudios y Estadísticas
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Acic	Sasa	M	Director	Union of Employers' Association of Republika Srpska
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ezic	Almira	F	Assisstent Minister	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Una-Sana Canton
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Latinic	Milka	F	Head of Department for Development of SMEs and Entrepreneurship	Ministry of Economy and Entrepreneurship of Republika Srpska
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lewis Salmon	Jago	M	Head of RCO	United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ljepojevic	Zorica	F	Head of Department of Industrial Development	Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Republika Srpska

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Macdonald	Ingrid	F	Resident Representative	United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mikulic	Mario	M	Assistant Minister	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of West-Herzegovina Canton
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Pandurevic	Mladen	M	Director	Association of Employers of the Federation of BiH
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Tanovic	Lejla	F	National Coordinator	ILO
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Telic	Darko	M	Head of Division for Funds and Development Assistance of the EU at the Department of for European Integration	Ministry for European Integration and International Cooperation of Republika Srpska
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Tomic	Igor	M	Associate Expert	Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska
Cameroon	Maiga	Aminata	F	Director, DWT/CO-Yaounde, RO Africa	ILO
Chile	Montt	Guillermo	M	Social Protection Specialist ILO Decent Work Team and Country Office for the South Cone of Latin America	ILO
Chile	Bertranou	Fabio	M	Director, DWT/CO Santiago, RO Latin America and Caribbean	ILO
Egypt	Oechslin	Eric	M	Director, DWT/CO Cairo	ILO
Geneva	Llanos	Maité	F	Assistant Director, International Trade Union Confederation	ILO
Geneva	Vincensini	Pierre	M	Snr Advisor, International Organization of Employers	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Aggarwal	Ashwani	M	Specialist, Skills Development Systems, SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Akiyama	Shinichi	M	Deputy Director, SECTOR	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Andrees	Beate	F	Office Director, New York Office, MULTILATERALS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Ayala	Luana	F	Technical Officer MSME Resilience SME ENTERPRISES	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Bald	Iain	M	Snr Strategic Planning and Policy Analyst, PROGRAM (Reference Group Member)	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Barrow	Anthony	M	Sr Risk Officer, TR/CF DG/REPORTS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Behrendt	Christina	F	Head, Social Policy Unit, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Bogui	André	M	Director, HR	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Brackenier	Els	F	Director INTSERV	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Ching	Annette	F	Director, CABINET	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Chugtai	Adnan	M	Treasurer/Director, FINANCE	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Geneva - HQ	Compton	Sharon	F	Branch Chief, HR/Talent, HRD	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Comyn	Paul	M	Snr Specialist, Skills & Employability, SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Dasgupta	Sukti	F	Branch Chief, EMPLAB, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Di Cola	Giovanni	M	Special Advisor, DDG/FOP (Reference Group Member)	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Diez de Medina	Rafael	M	Director, STATISTICS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Donnges	Chris	M	Snr Economist, EMPINVEST, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Edmonds	Casper	M	Unit Head, Extractive, Energy and Manufacturing, SECTOR	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Ernst	Christoph	M	Snr Specialist, Informal Economy, DEVINVEST, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Fillieux	Marc	M	Branch Chief, HR/Ops, HRD	ILO
Geneva - HQ	France-Massin	Deborah	F	Bureau Director, ACT/EMP	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Ghellab	Youcef	M	Head of Unit, Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Gudiño	Florencio	M	Snr Programme Analyst PROGRAM	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Gueye	Moustapha Kamal	M	Unit Head, Green Jobs Programme, ENTERPRISES	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Hassan	Yasser	M	Snr Advisor, CABINET	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Howard	James	M	Snr Advisor, CABINET	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Jiang	Mohui	M	Director, PROGRAM	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Khan	Alim	M	Knowledge Manager	ILO
Geneva - HQ	King	Chidi	F	Branch Chief, GED, WORKQUALITY	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Klein	Jean-François	M	Snr Administrator, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Lee	Sangheon	M	Director, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Leighton	Michelle	F	Branch Chief, MIGRANT, WORKQUALITY	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Marcadent	Philippe	M	Branch Chief, INWORK, WORKQUALITY	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Murphy	Martin	M	Director, DCOMM	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Mwamadzingo	Mohammed	M	Snr Economist, ACTRAV	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Negro	Federico	M	Head of CSPR Unit, DEVINVEST, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Newton	Martha	F	Deputy Director General for Policy	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Nour	Rim	F	Technical Expert on Social Transfers, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Nunes	Joaquim Pintado	M	Chief, LABADMIN/OSH	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Oelz	Martin	M	Specialist, Equality and non-discrimination, GEDI Branch	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Geneva - HQ	Oumarou	Moussa	M	Deputy Director General, Field Operations and Partnerships	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Pal	Karuna	F	Head, Programming, Partnerships and Knowledge-sharing Unit, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Paquete-Perdigao	Vera	F	Director, GOVERNANCE	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Perrin	Christophe	M	Director, MULTILATERALS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Peyron Bista	Céline	F	Chief Technical Advisor on Social Protection, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Pozzan	Emanuela	F	Snr Gender Specialist, GEDI Branch	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Radic	Dragan	M	Unit Head, Small Enterprises, ENTERPRISES	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Razavi	Shahra	F	Director, SOCPRO	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Reddy	Srivinas	M	Branch Chief, SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Rees	Dan	M	Branch Chief, BETTERWORK, GOVERNANCE	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Samans	Richard	M	Director, RESEARCH	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Sarna	Ritash	M	Head, Management and Support Unit, STATISTICS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Schiefer	Wolfgang	M	Coordinator, UN and Sustainable Development, MULTILATERALS	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Schmitt	Valérie	F	Deputy Director, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Slampyak	Stephen	M	Snr Auditor, IAO	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Staermose	Tine	F	Special Advisor, Labour Market Institutions and Governance, DDG/P (Reference Group Member)	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Strietska-Ilina	Olga	F	Snr Specialist, Skills & Employability, SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Tessier	Lou	F	Social Protection Technical Officer, Social Protection Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Tomei	Manuela	F	Director, WORKQUALITY	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Tsakamoto	Mitoui	F	Chief DEVINVEST	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Vacotto	Beatriz	F	Head of Maritime Unit, International Labour Standards Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Van Empel	Carlien	F	Head, Development Cooperation Support PARDEV	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Van Leur	Alette	F	Director, SECTOR	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Van Vuuren	Vic	M	Director ENTERPRISES	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Vanhuynegem	Philippe	M	Branch Chief, FUNDAMENTALS, GOVERNANCE	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Vargha	Corinne	F	Director, NORMES	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Vejs-Kjeldgaard	Rie	F	Director PARDEV	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Geneva - HQ	Vines	Greg	M	Deputy Director General Management and Reform	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Wagner	Brandt	M	Head, Transport and Maritime Unit, Sectoral Policies Department	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Watson	Anthony	M	Chief Internal Auditor IAO	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Watt	Michael	M	Technical Officer ACTRAV	ILO
Geneva - HQ	Koller	Heinz	M	Director, Europe and Central Asia	ILO
Germany	Johns	Dirke Max	M	Chair, Labour Affairs Committee (Vice chairperson STC-MLC)	International Chamber of Shipping
Hungary	Pilgrim	Markus	M	Director, DWT/CO Budapest, RO Europe and Central Asia	ILO
India	Walter	Dagmar	F	Director, DWT/CO New Delhi, RO Asia and the Pacific	ILO
Indonesia	Julliland	Valerie	F	UN Resident Coordinator - Indonesia	United Nations
Indonesia	Miyamoto	Michiko	F	Country Office Director	ILO
Indonesia	Julia	Lusiani	F	Senior Programme Officer	ILO
Indonesia	Gunawan	Tendy	M	Programme Officer	ILO
Indonesia	Saifuddin	Irham	M	Programme Officer	ILO
Indonesia	Savitri	Pipit	F	Communication and Partnerships Officer, Better Work Indonesia (BWI)	ILO
Indonesia	Panjaitan	Christianus	M	National Project Officer, Unemployment Protection in Indonesia - Quality Assistance for Workers Affected by Labour Adjustments (UNIQLO)	ILO
Indonesia	Hakim	Abdul	M	National Project Officer, Enhancing COVID-19 Prevention at and through Workplaces	ILO
Indonesia	Nuriana	Early Dewi	F	National Project Coordinator, Extending Access to HIV Prevention	ILO
Indonesia	Muhammad	Nour	M	National Project Manager, Alliance 8.7 Accelerator Lab to Combat Modern Slavery	ILO
Indonesia	Gah	Yunirwan	M	National Project Coordinator, Advancing Workers' Rights in Indonesia's Palm Oil Sector	ILO
Indonesia	Rustandie	Januar	M	National Project Manager Improved Workers' Rights in Rural Sectors of the Indo-Pacific with a focus on Women	ILO
Indonesia	Mochtar	Muce	M	National Project Officer, Skills for Prosperity Programme in Indonesia	ILO
Indonesia	Simatupang	Ferdinand Leohansen	M	National Project Officer, Skills for Prosperity Programme in Indonesia	ILO
Indonesia	Afandi	Irfan	M	National Project Officer, Skills for Prosperity Programme in Indonesia	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Indonesia	Bonasahat	Albert	M	National Project Coordinator, Ship to Shore Rights Indonesia	ILO
Indonesia	Sudarto	Reti Dyah	F	National Project Officer, Promotion of C190 ratification and prevention of violence and harassment at work in Indonesia	ILO
Indonesia	Harkrisnowo	Sinthia	F	National Project Coordinator, SAFE & FAIR: Realizing Women Migrant Workers' Rights and Opportunities in the ASEAN Region	ILO
Indonesia	Muhamad	Tauvik	M	Technical Advisor, Industry Skills for Inclusive Growth (InSIGHT) Phase 2	ILO
Indonesia		Tari	F	Staff, International Cooperation Division	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Fauzi	M	Training Division	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Tripuji	F	Training Division	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Diah	F	Training Division	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Anitasari	F	Labor Inspector (OSH)	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Muzakir	M	Labor Inspector (OSH)	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia		Sudi	M	Labor Inspector (OSH)	Ministry of Manpower
Indonesia	Savitri	Diana	F	Deputy Director, International Strategic Partnership Center (ISPC)	APINDO (Indonesian Employers' Association)
Indonesia	Zulkarnain	Iwan	M	Office Manager	APINDO
Indonesia	Melati	Rima	F	Expert on OSH	APINDO
Indonesia	Sulistiyowati	Eko	F	Management, Central Java Branch	APINDO
Indonesia	Joenan	Royke	M	Management, Central Java Branch	APINDO
Indonesia	Sidauruk	Markus	M	Vice President of Programming	KSBSI (Confederation of Indonesian Welfare Trade Unions)
Indonesia		Sulistri	F	General Secretary, F-KAMIPARHO	KSBSI
Indonesia		Dalail	M	Vice General Secretary	K-SARBUMUSI (Confederation of Indonesian Moslem Trade Unions)
Indonesia	Inseun	Habibi	M	Chair of KSPI Aceh	KSPI (Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions)
Indonesia	Sembiring	Fredy	M	Head of Education and Training Division	KSPSI (Confederation of All Indonesian Trade Unions)
Indonesia	Mustaqim	Ahmad	M	General Secretary	KSPN (Confederation of National Trade Unions)
Indonesia	Hariyani	Rini Wahyu	F	Master Trainer	Riwani Globe
Indonesia	Kristianto	Jeff	M	Honorary Board & Board Adviser	BEDO (Business & Export Development Organization)

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Indonesia	Tobing	Tamiang	F	Sign Language Interpreter	Aksara Sunyi Nusantara
Indonesia		Eddy	M	Chairperson	IDKI (The Indonesian Medical Association for Occupational Health)
Indonesia	Johan	Anita	F	Secretary	IDKI
Indonesia	Krisita	Jovita	F	Member	IDKI
Iraq	Abdulah khan	Hangaw	M	Head of the executive office	Federation of Labour Union KRI
Iraq	Abdulameer	Mohamed	M	Project coordinator SIYB	ILO
Iraq	AL Jarba	Abdulazeez	M	Head of the organization	Al Tahrir Organizaiton
Iraq	Al Safar	Adnan	M	General Secretary	General Federation of Iraqi Trade
Iraq	Ali	Sadir	M	Project coordinator	IOM
Iraq	Baded	Raid Jabar	M	General Director	Vocational Training office- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)
Iraq	Comerford	David	M	director of the programs and partnership	Clic
Iraq	Danbous	Sattar	M	President	General Federation of Iraq Workers (GFIW)
Iraq	Elsamarneh	Bashar	M	Technical officer – including Iraq program EIIP (employment intensive improvement program)	ILO
Iraq	Hawezy	Lawen	M	technical specialist – child labour project	ILO
Iraq	Heto	Dr. Arfi	M	General director of vocational training and job	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) – Kurdistan Region – Iraq
Iraq	Jradi	Fadia	F	Prospect Manager - Prospect	ILO
Iraq	Kadhim	Nassr	M	Program Manager	Media Centre for Civil Society Organizations in Iraq
Iraq	Katta	Maha	F	ILO country coordinator – Iraq and regional resilience specialist	ILO
Iraq	Khalid	Abdulah	M	director of the executive board	Peace and freedom organization
Iraq	Mahroos	Saad	M	Board member of the Iraqi Federation of Industries	Iraqi Federation of industries
Iraq	Mohamed	Yassen	M	Project coordinator	Clic
Iraq	Raouf	Dr Qusi	M	Director of CSO	Central Statistical Office (CSO), Ministry of Planning
Iraq	Saalan	Mahera	F	Coordinator and Finance manager	Iraqi Federation of industries

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Iraq	Sabri	Shler	F	Program director	Kurdistan Save the Children
Iraq	Saheb	Ali	M	Program Manager	Maloma center
Iraq	Salih	Sanger	M	Program Coordinator	Peace and freedom organization
Iraq	Sherwani	Azad	M	Director of public relations	CoC Erbil (Federation of Chamber of Commerce Union - KRI)
Iraq	Sudah	Nelle	F	program director	SWEDO
Iraq	Yousif	Hazhar	M	senior project coordinator	SWEDO
Iraq	Ziad	Loya	M	Project Manager	Al Tahrir Organizaiton
Italy	Klemmer	Andreas	M	Director ITCILO	ILO
Lebanon	Jaradat	Ruba	F	Director, RO Arab States	ILO
Lebanon	Jondi	Shaza	F	Program Manager – Prospect (Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan )	ILO
Lebanon	Pasaribu	Octavianto	M	Chief, Regional Programming Services	ILO
Lebanon	Rademaker	Peter	M	Deputy Regional Director & Director of ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team	ILO
Madagascar	Agossou	Coffi	M	Directeur	ILO
Madagascar	Andriamahefarivo	Solange Landy	F	Directeur, Actions Sanitaires et Sociales	Caisse nationale de prévoyance sociale (CNaPS)
Madagascar	Anona	Marie Agnes	F	Directeur du Développement et du Partenariat	Ecole nationale d'administration de Madagascar (ENAM)
Madagascar	Botoudi	Rémi Henri	M	Coordonnateur Général	Conférence des Travailleurs de Madagascar (CTM)
Madagascar	Chan Ching Yiu	Béatrice	F	Vice-Présidente et Présidente de la Commission Sociale GEM	Groupe des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP)
Madagascar	Foe Andegue	Bernard	M	Chef de projet, Projet VZF II	ILO
Madagascar	Harilanto	Rajoely Miamina	F	Directrice de la Sécurité Sociale des Travailleurs, Lead de la Task Force de l'Inspection du Travail	Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la fonction publique et des lois sociales
Madagascar	Mahandrimanana	Andrianainarivelo	M	Directeur	Centre National de Formation Professionnelle pour les Personnes en Situation de Handicap (C.N.F.P.S.H.)



Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Madagascar	Manoarivelo	Sariaka Falianja	F	Vice-président, Président Commission Environnement et Développement Durable, Pilote Commission Santé et Sécurité au Travail	Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP)
Madagascar	Rabeniary	Maddy	F	Public Health Specialist	Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS, Madagascar)
Madagascar	Raboanaly	Emma	F	Assistante à la communication et à l'information publique	ILO
Madagascar	Rakotoniaina	Barbara	F	Chef de département SST	Organisation Sanitaire Tananarivienne Inter-entreprise (OSTIE)
Madagascar	Rakotonirina	Désiré	M	Chef de Département Technique	AMIT
Madagascar	Ramaromanana	Clara	F	Chargée de programme	ILO
Madagascar	Randriamaromisanarivo	Fidelis	M	Président	Plateforme nationale de l'économie informelle
Madagascar	Randrianarisoa	Pierre Christian	M	Coordonnateur National du Projet du SDG Fund	ILO
Madagascar	Randrianirainy Heriniaina	Arsène	M	Directeur	Institut National du travail (INTra)
Madagascar	Razafimanantsoa	Jerson	M	Secrétaire Général	Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la fonction publique et des lois sociales
Madagascar	Razafimandimby	Eva	F	Directeur Exécutif	Groupement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires (GEFP)
Madagascar	Razafimandimby	Noémie	F	Administratrice nationale du projet REFRAME	ILO
Madagascar	Razafindrasolo	Tianaso	M	Médecin-Chef	Fund Health Center (FUNHECE) Antananarivo
Madagascar	Razafinisoa	Nombana	F	Chargée de programme	ILO
Madagascar	Razakaboana	Hanitra Fitiavana	F	Directrice Générale du Travail et des Lois Sociales	Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la fonction publique et des lois sociales
Madagascar	Razakazafy	Rojo	M	Médecin du Travail	SMIA, Antsirabe
Madagascar	Tiandraza	Vola	F	Responsable technique	Association AMPELAMITRAOKE, Ambovombe Androy
Mexico	Alvarez	Paula	F	National Project Officer - proyecto Cerrando Brechas: Protección Social para las mujeres en México	ILO
Mexico	Aragón	Miriam	F	SADER Secretary of Agriculture	
Mexico	Arguello	Jose	M	Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER)	

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Mexico	Balbuena	Rubén	M	Seguridad y Bienestar Laboral (ISBL)	
Mexico	D. Hyver	Alejandra	F	ONU Mujeres - Proyecto Cerrando Brechas: Protección Social para las mujeres en México	
Mexico	Delord	Pierre	M	Project Coordinator - Fortalecimiento de capacidades de los gobiernos locales de Santiago de Chile y Ciudad de México para fortalecer la integración socioeconómica de las personas migrantes y refugiadas a través del acceso al trabajo decente, medios de vida sostenibles y diálogo social	ILO
Mexico	Ferreira	Carolina	F	Oficial Técnica de Empleos Verdes	ILO
Mexico	Flores	Erika	F	Senior Programme Officer	ILO
Mexico	Gómez	Isaías	M	UN - FAO - Proyecto Cerrando Brechas: Protección Social para las mujeres en México	
Mexico	Lagunes	Cointa	F	National Advisory Commission on Safety and Health at Work (COCONASST)	
Mexico	Martinez	Gerson	M	Employment Policy Specialist	ILO
Mexico	Martínez	Félix	M	National Association of the Coffee Industry (ANICAFE)	
Mexico	Mogrovejo	Rodrigo	M	Project Manager - Seguridad y salud en la cadena de valor global del café, con énfasis en América Latina-Fondo Visión Cero (VZF).	ILO
Mexico	Munaretto	María	F	Technical Officer VZF	ILO
Mexico	Oliveira	Pedro	M	Director de la Oficina	ILO
Mexico	Pocasangre	Vanessa	F	Project Technical Officer - Promoción del empleo y protección social en el marco integral de respuesta a los refugiados en América Central y México	ILO
Mexico	Rivera	Ricardo	M	Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS)	
Mexico	Robledo	José	M	Centro Nacional de Investigación, Innovación y Desarrollo Tecnológico del Café (CENACAFE)	
Mexico	Roque	Pedro	M	Mexican Association of the Coffee Production Chain (AMECAFE)	
Mexico	Zavala	Edith	F	National Project Coordinator - Recuperación del empleo frente al COVID19 en México con un enfoque de transición justa'	ILO
Montenegro	Krgovic	Nina	F	National Coordinator	ILO
Montenegro	Lazovic	Filip	M	Adviser for Legal Affairs and Social Dialogue	Montenegrin Employers Federation

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Montenegro	Mihajlovic	Ivana	F	Deputy General Secretary	Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro
Montenegro	Oluic	Zvezdana	F	Head of Department for PR and Marketing	Montenegrin Employers Federation
North Macedonia	Boshkov	Mile	M	President	Business Confederation of Macedonia
North Macedonia	Krstanovski	Emil	M	National Coordinator	ILO
North Macedonia	Loshkovska	Radmila	F	Secretary of the Economic and Social Council	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Macedonia
North Macedonia	Nikolovska	Belinda	F	Adviser	Organization of Employers of Macedonia
North Macedonia	Papatolevska	Maja	F	Head of labour legislation and employment policy	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Macedonia
North Macedonia	Ristovska Antikj	Svetlana	F	Executive Director	Organization of Employers of Macedonia
North Macedonia	Trendafilov	Slobodan	M	Chief of the Cabinet	Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia
Peru	Coenjaerts	Claudia	F	Deputy Regional Director Latin America and Caribbean	ILO
Peru	Pinheiro	Vincensius	M	Regional Director Latin America and Caribbean	ILO
Russia	Koulaeva	Olga	F	Director, DWT/CO Moscow, RO Europe and Central Asia	ILO
Senegal	Diallo	Yacouba	M	Snr Specialist, Labour Statistics, DWT/CO Dakar, RO Africa	ILO
Serbia	Andric	Cedanka	F	President	Trade Union Confederation "Independence"
Serbia	Jacob	Francoise	F	Resident Representative	United Nations in Serbia
Serbia	Jeremic	Borka	F	Assistant Representative and Head of Office	United Nations Population Fund Serbia
Serbia	Kuzmic	Dejana	F	Head of International Cooperation	Association of Employers Serbia
Serbia	Paunovic	Sanja	F	Economic Adviser	Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS)
Serbia	Pavlovic	Ljiljana	F	Manager	Association of Employers Serbia
Serbia	Protic	Jovan	M	National Coordinator	ILO
Serbia	Savic	Dragana	F	Head/International Relations Department	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy
Serbia	Vasiljevic	Dusko	M	Vice President	Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS)

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
South Africa	Kidanu	Asfaw	M	Senior Specialist Employment Intensive Investment	ILO
South Africa	Lintini	Naomy	F	Senior Specialist-Anticipated Skills	ILO
South Africa	Moitse	Sindile	F	Senior Programme Officer	ILO
South Africa	Musabayana	Joni	M	DWT/CO Director	ILO
South Africa	Ngcobo	Lindokuhle	M	Programme Management-E Marketing	South African Local Government Association
South Africa	Ramaifo	Khomotso	F	Director-Research and Policy Development	Department of Small Business Development
South Africa	Seftel	Lisa	F	Executive Director	National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC)
South Africa	Tekie	Amy	F	Co Founder & Director	Izwi Domestic Workers Alliance
South Africa	Tseleli	Pindile	F	Assistant Director	Department of Small Business Development
Suva	Karimli	Martin	M	Director, Country Office Pacific Island Countries	ILO
Thailand	ko	Htike	M	Migrant beneficiary	
Thailand	Andersson	Sara	F	Project technical Officer, Rebuliding Better: Fostering Business Resilience Post-COVID-19	ILO
Thailand	Asada-Miyakawa	Chihoko	F	Director, RO Asia and the Pacific	ILO
Thailand	Baruah	Nilim	M	Senior Migration Specialist	ILO
Thailand	Brimblecombe	Simon	M	Chief Technical Adviser and Head, Regional Actuarial Services	ILO
Thailand	Buckley	Graeme	M	Director, DWT/CO Bangkok, RO Asia and the Pacific	ILO
Thailand	Chaiyadej	Tawat	M	Director - Protection of Workers, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Chatsawat	Thanyathip	F	Project Manager	World Vision
Thailand	Cunha	Nuno	M	Senior Specialist on Social Protection	ILO
Thailand	Dokmai	Raweeporn	F	Programme Coordinator	HRDF
Thailand	Dudsorn	Boonyarat	F	Coordinator	State Enterprises Worker's Relations Confederation
Thailand	Duksukkaew	Rachada	F	Labour Official - Profession level, Department of Employment	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Engblom	Anna	F	Chief Technical Adviser and Head, TRIANGLE In ASEAN	ILO
Thailand	Harkins	Ben Harkins	M	Technical Officer , South East Asia regional programme for labour migration in the fishing sector - Ship to Shore Rights SE Asia	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Thailand	Hartough	Jon	M	Programme Manager	Fisher Rights Network
Thailand	Homsud	Wasurat	M	Programme Manager	Raks Thai
Thailand	Kaew-wan	Sawit	M	Chairman	State Enterprises Worker's Relations Confederation Foundation
Thailand	Kanjanaketu	Ukrish	M	Advisor	Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)
Thailand	Klaicharoen	Chao	M	Advisor	National Congress Private Industrial of Employees
Thailand	Kongsatit	Sunarie	F	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, Department of Employment	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Kongsi	Yaowaluck	F	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, Department of Skill Development	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Kruechareon	Kasemsan	M	Director - Informal Worker Protection, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	kyaw	Aung myo	M	Migrant beneficiary	
Thailand	Lephilibert	Natthanicha	F	National Project Coordinator, Safe and Fair	ILO
Thailand	Liewchawalit	Chalothorn	F	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, International Cooperation Bureau, Permanent Secretary Office	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Limchularat	Tarinee	F	Labour Official - Profession level, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Manuchae	Koreeyor	F	Project Coordinator	Migrant Workers Group
Thailand	Niwatananun	Kawita	F	National Project Coordinator, Young Futuremakers Thailand – Promoting Youth Employability	ILO
Thailand	Paspitsanu	Pairoj	M	Skill Development Official - Senior Professional level, Department of Skill Development	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Pattamasukon	Samart	M	Assistant Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Paweerawat	Chayani	F	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, Social Security Office	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Phannajit	Nicha	F	Project officer	Raks Thai
Thailand	Rachawang	Nati	M	Director - Curriculum development and skill training Division, Department of Skill Development	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Ritmontri	Nannadda	F	Director - Policy Development and Social Innovation	Ministry of Social development and Human Security
Thailand	Rotjanahussadin	Metinee	F	Project officer	World Vision
Thailand	Sabharwal	Gita	F	UN Resident Coordinator	United Nations
Thailand	Sajumpa	Nattakarn	F	Labour Official - Profession level, Department of Employment	Ministry of Labour

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Thailand	Sakaekum	Puttan	F	Programme Coordinator	State Enterprises Worker's Relations Confederation Foundation
Thailand	Simma	Thanakorn	M	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, International Cooperation Bureau, Permanent Secretary Office	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	sitticum	aekkapop	M	Project Officer	World Vision
Thailand	Sittito	Chayaporn	F	Foreign Affairs Official - Professional level, Department of Employment	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Suanmuang Tulaphan	Poonsap	F	Director	HomeNet and Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (FLEP)
Thailand	Subsrisunjai	Polwish	M	Project officer	HRDF
Thailand	Sujjaweta	Kaewjai	F	Director - International Cooperation Bureau, Permanent Secretary Office	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Suwannabhumi	Napoom	M	Statistician - Professional level - Social Security Office	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Suwisuttikasem	Warat	F	Skill Development Official - Senior Professional level, Department of Skill Development	Ministry of Labour
Thailand	Tangworamongkol	Chonthicha	F	National Project Coordinator, TRIANGLE in ASEAN	ILO
Thailand	Techateeravat	Tavee	M	Chairman	Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC)
Thailand	Thanesvorakul	Karnmanee	F	National Project Coordinator, Project technical Officer, Rebuilding Better: Fostering Business Resilience Post-COVID-19	ILO
Thailand	Trakoonhutip	Suchart	M	Project Manager	MAP
Thailand	Tsushima	Reiko	F	Chief, Regional Programming, RO Asia and the Pacific	ILO
Thailand	Ujita	Yuka	F	Snr OSH Specialist, DWT Bangkok	ILO
Thailand	Up-Patcha	Linfa	F	Project officer	World Vision
Thailand	Weidenkaff	Felix	M	Youth Employment Specialist	ILO
Trinidad and Tobago	Zulu	Dennis	M	Director, DWT/CO Port of Spain, RO Latin America and Caribbean	ILO
United Kingdom	Barcellona	Fabrizio	M	Seafarers and Inland Navigation Section Coordinator, representative, Special Tripartite Committee-MLC	International Transport Workers Federation
United Kingdom	Carlton	Julie	F	Head, Seafarer Safety and Health, former Chair, STC-MLC	UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency
United Kingdom	Deggim	Heike	F	Director, Maritime Safety Division	International Maritime Organization

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
United Kingdom	Dickinson	Mark	M	General Secretary, Nautilus International, Vice Chairperson - Seafarers, Special Tripartite Committee-MLC	Nautilus International
United Kingdom	Kenney	Frederick J.	M	Director, Legal Affairs and External Relations Division	International Maritime Organization
United Kingdom	Shaw	Natalie	F	Director, Employment Affairs	International Chamber of Shipping
Uruguay	Casanova	Fernando	M	Programme Officer	ILO
Uruguay	Figueira	Rodrigo	M	Especialista en digitalización y formación profesional	ILO
Uruguay	Graña	Gonzalo	M	Oficial Nacional de Diálogo Social y Formación Profesional	ILO
Uruguay	Matossa	Ana Clara	F	Sr Communication and Information Management Asst	ILO
Uruguay	Posthuma	Anne Caroline	F	Directora	ILO
Uruguay	Vargas	Fernando	M	Especialista Senior en Formación Profesional	ILO
Vietnam	Barcucci	Valentina	F	Senior Economist	ILO
Vietnam	Chu	Tien Dat	M	Deputy Head, International Relations Department	Vietnam Cooperatives Alliance
Vietnam	Da Silva Gama Nogueira	Carlos Andre	M	Programme Manager, Social protection	ILO
Vietnam	Do	Thi Hien	F	Officer	WHO, Vietnam
Vietnam	Doan	Thi Nhung	F	Program Officer Vietnam	Global Coffee Platform
Vietnam	Escalante	Socorro	F	Acting Officer in Charge	WHO, Vietnam
Vietnam	Forsberg	Le Thanh	F	UN Strategic Results and Partnerships Specialist	UN Resident Coordinator Office, Vietnam
Vietnam	Ho	Thi Kim Ngan	F	Deputy Head, Labour Relations Department	Vietnam General Federation of Labour
Vietnam	Hoang	Ha	M	Programme Officer, Employment	ILO
Vietnam	Hoursat	Marielle	F	Manager, Regional Social Health Protection Project	ILO
Vietnam	Kurths	Kristina	F	Project Manager, VZF Coffee Sector project	ILO
Vietnam	Lee	Chang-hee	M	Country Director (former Country Director, Vietnam)	ILO
Vietnam	Mai	Hong Ngoc	F	Manager, Bureau for Employers' Activities	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Vietnam	Nguyen	Hai Dat	M	National Programme Coordinator, Social protection	ILO

Country/ other	Surname	Given name	Gender (m/f/o)	Job title	Organization name
Vietnam	Nguyen	Thi Mai Thuy	F	Vietnam Coordinator, Ship to Shore Rights	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Thi My Dung	F	Coordinator, Compliance and Dialogue in Global Supply Chains Project	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Thi Le Van	F	National Officer	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Anh Tho	M	Former Vice Director, Department of Labour Safety	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
Vietnam	Nguyen	Hong Ha	F	Programme Manager, Better Work Vietnam	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Ngoc Trieu	M	Senior Programme Office	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Ngoc Son	M	Programme Officer, Social protection	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Thi Huyen	F	National Officer, Informality	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen	Phuong Thi	F	Project Officer, ENHANCE project	ILO
Vietnam	Nguyen Le	Nhat Thanh	M	Deputy Head, Bureau for Employer's Activities	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam	Payne	David	M	Coordinator, COVID-19 response	UNDP, Vietnam
Vietnam	Pham	Thi Hoang Lien	F	Coordinator, Better Work	ILO
Vietnam	Pham	Quoc Thuan	M	Coordinator, Better Work	ILO
Vietnam	Pham	Quang Trung	M	Program Manager Vietnam	Global Coffee Platform
Vietnam	Tran	Anh Thanh	M	Head, Occupational Health Management Division	Health and Environment Management Agency, Ministry of Health, Vietnam
Vietnam	Vu	Kim Hue	F	Project Officer, Social Dialogue in Supply Chains	ILO
Vietnam	Vu	Mai Hoang	M	Statistician, Department of Labour Statistics	Vietnam General Statistics Office



## ► Annex B: Evaluation questions

	(A) Institutional readiness & capacity	(B) Policy action at national, regional & global levels
RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Did the ILO have any <b>policies, procedures and contingency plans</b> in place prior to the onset of the pandemic that helped prepare it for the crisis?</li> <li>► To what extent did ILO's <b>programme and policy frameworks</b> (P&amp;B and DWCPs) remain relevant to the new circumstances?</li> <li>► How did the ILO <b>adapt its management approach</b> (in HQ and in the field) in response to uncertainty and unpredictable change in the early stages of the pandemic? Were these adaptations relevant, effective and timely?</li> <li>► How well has the ILO <b>engaged with constituents</b> and responded to their needs in framing the organisation's response to the pandemic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► <b>What changed</b> that required an ILO response (e.g. needs, circumstances, priorities; including global, regional, national differences)?</li> <li>► <b>How were responses to these changes developed</b> (including role of social dialogue and tripartism; changes in response to analysis/data on new circumstances; support for national, regional, global/UN COVID-19 plans/strategies)?</li> <li>► What <b>actions</b> did the ILO take to address decent work deficits caused or worsened by the pandemic? How were <b>existing programmes</b> adapted? What <b>new interventions</b> were established? What was the focus of these actions (i.e. crisis response, preparing for recovery)?</li> <li>► Were actions underpinned by a sound <b>program logic and theory of change that reflected the new</b> circumstances?</li> <li>► <b>Moving forward</b>, what policy and programme actions will the ILO need to prioritise to maximise relevance?</li> </ul>
COHERENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► How well has the ILO <b>coordinated its response</b> across HQ departments and between HQ and the field to ensure an adaptable and timely response?</li> <li>► To what extent do the ILO and its <b>partners</b> have a <b>shared understanding of their respective roles</b> in responding to COVID-19 effects in the world of work?</li> <li>► To what extent is the ILO's <b>response to COVID-19 aligned</b> to the principles enshrined in the ILO Global call to action, the <b>Centenary Declaration, key ILO conventions</b>, and <b>emerging concerns</b> as expressed in GB/ILC discussions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► How well have the ILO's actions in response to the pandemic cohered/ created <b>synergies across the different outcome areas</b>?</li> <li>► How well have the ILO's actions complemented similar efforts carried out by <b>other development actors, UN agencies and national governments</b>?</li> <li>► What are the <b>positive synergies</b> between ILO interventions and between the ILO and other partners (constituents, national institutions, international financial institutions and UN development agencies)? Is there evidence of <b>obstacles and challenges</b> in relation to synergies?</li> <li>► How well have the ILO's actions integrated its <b>normative and social dialogue mandate</b> and reflected its commitment to <b>gender</b> equality, supporting <b>vulnerable groups</b>, and <b>making a just transition</b> towards environmental sustainability?</li> </ul>

	(A) Institutional readiness & capacity	(B) Policy action at national, regional & global levels
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does the <b>current monitoring and reporting</b> (Outcome and indicators) allow for tracking the progress and informing the ILOs strategy to respond to the effects of COVID-19 in the world of work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Were actions (including at global, regional and national levels) effective in addressing the <b>decent work deficits caused or worsened</b> by the pandemic?</li> <li>▶ Has the ILO been able to apply <b>innovative approaches</b> for an effective and timely action to mitigate the immediate effects of the pandemic?</li> <li>▶ <b>Did certain groups benefit</b> from ILO response interventions <b>more than others</b>?</li> </ul>
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How well have the ILO's <b>resource mobilization</b> efforts supported its capacity to deliver an adaptable and timely response?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How well were <b>existing resources</b> (including development cooperation project funds) adjusted to address the circumstances brought about by the pandemic in a timely way?</li> <li>▶ Were financial and human resources <b>adequate</b> for the response and were they <b>used efficiently</b>?</li> <li>▶ Were actions cost effective?</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY &amp; IMPACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To what extent has ILO improved its ability to respond in programme and policy terms to future crises?</li> <li>▶ Do ILO results frameworks integrate recovery response in a sustainable manner?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What are the different <b>effects</b> that actions have had / are likely to have in <b>addressing the decent work deficits</b> caused/worsened by the pandemic, and what actions are necessary to sustain them? To what extent is the strategy and action <b>benefiting the intended beneficiaries and national policies</b>?</li> <li>▶ To what extent has the ILO <b>strengthened capacities</b> of governments, workers and employers' organizations' representatives so they can better serve the needs of their members and participate in social partnership for COVID-19 response and recovery?</li> <li>▶ To what extent have the projects made/are likely to make progress as part of the COVID-19 response of the ILO in advancing <b>cross-cutting issues</b> of standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender equality and non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability?</li> <li>▶ Do the ILO interventions <b>include long-term strategies</b> to ensure up-scaling and sustainability of results for a human-centred future of work?</li> </ul>

## ▶ Annex C: Methodology

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The following methodology, as set out in the HLE's Inception report, was followed:

### APPROACH

The evaluation will be guided by:

- ▶ [Protocol 1: Policy outcomes and institutional evaluations](#) (HLEs), revised version, Nov 2019
- ▶ [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#)
- ▶ [Guidance note on adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#)
- ▶ [Guidance note on integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation](#)
- ▶ The evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the ILO [code of conduct for evaluators](#).

The consultants acknowledge that they understand the formatting requirements for the evaluation report, including acceptance of the terms of the checklist on preparing the evaluation report, and confirm that they have received all necessary documentation.

The evaluation will:

- ▶ Use predominantly qualitative methods to estimate change and attribution at each stage in the programme logic;
- ▶ Combine data gathering and interpretation by programme staff with external review;
- ▶ Use, where appropriate, monitoring systems developed and results gathered by ILO;

The evaluation will answer evaluation questions (see Table 2) grouped under the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria. These questions are based on the questions and issues outlined in the ToR, but also reflect input obtained from stakeholders consulted (remotely and in-person) during the inception phase (March-April 2022).

The evaluation will be participatory, and ILO's tripartite constituents will be involved at all stages of the evaluation process. Existing cross-cutting themes will be integrated in the evaluation methodology.

The team will adhere to ILO Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation throughout the evaluation process. The team will involve women as well as men in the data gathering phase and consultations. The team will pay particular attention to gender equality in any focus group discussions or workshops to either ensure equal participation or separate group discussions. The gender expert on the team will advise team members in addressing gender issues and the inclusion of gender equality in all aspects of the evaluation. All team members have experience in evaluating gender issues of ILO's work. The analysis will make efforts to understand the root causes of gender gaps and take into account how COVID-19 affected both women and men. Data and information will be disaggregated by sex where available.

The evaluation will further look at the inclusion of people with disabilities, human rights, environment and other ILO cross-cutting themes throughout the evaluation. The team will ensure that adequate accommodation be considered and action taken for persons with disabilities to participate in evaluation interviews, group discussions or workshops and any site visits as relevant. The team will consider the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations.

Summary ratings (on a six-point scale) will be made against each of the six evaluation criteria in consultation with the ILO senior evaluation officer.

## METHODS

Three methods will be used for collecting data and information: (a) document review; (b) interviews; and (c) surveys. The data will be assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively, though we recognise that doing any serious statistical analysis without widely available impact results will be difficult, so we anticipate that the evaluation will be predominantly qualitative. Given that COVID-19 travel restrictions still apply in many countries, much of the work of the evaluation consultants will need to be undertaken remotely (e.g. via MS Teams) and via national consultants based in the countries being examined.

### Document review

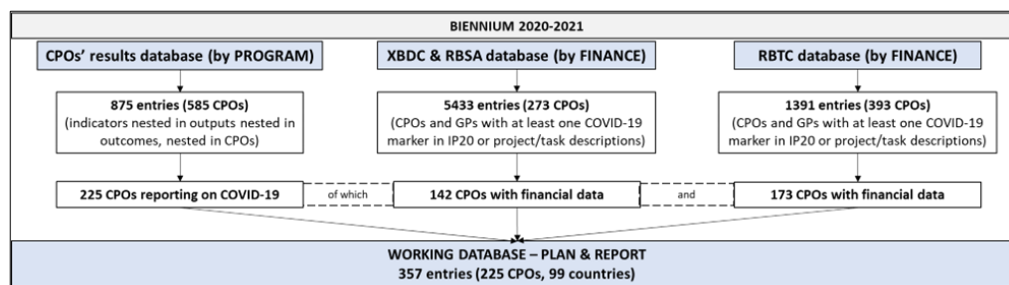
In the inception phase, relevant policy, strategy and evaluation documents and web pages have been reviewed (see **Annex C** for documents/links relating to some relevant initiatives in regions, **Annex D** for documents/links related to the HLE's four Focus Areas, and **Annex E** for key ILO policy documents and Governing Body papers related to the pandemic response). Such document review efforts will continue, in conjunction with collection and review of more specific programme documents and data and information from regions and countries.

To assess the dissemination and influence of knowledge products, the evaluation will also seek data on website views and downloads and use tools such as Overton to measure knowledge product citations and mentions.

In addition, [the synthesis review of relevant evaluations](#) will be used as a source of information and for triangulation of findings.

As part of the policy and strategy analysis, the evaluation will analyse Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), global products, programmes and projects that included specific actions developed in response to COVID-19 as well as an analysis of resources applied. Data provided by the ILO Finance and PROGRAM Departments will be used to inform this exercise as well as qualitative reporting on actions and achievements. Preliminary analysis commenced in the inception phase - **Figure 2** illustrates the main steps taken to combine the available information.

**FIGURE 2: ANALYTICAL STRATEGY FOR THE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF CPOS AND GLOBAL PRODUCTS.**



Results from the preliminary analysis suggest largest expenditure figures on interventions reporting under the P&B (2020-21) Outcome 7 (Adequate and effective protection at work for all), with over USD47 million, and Outcome 3 (Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all), with over USD30 million. Figure 3 below depicts a major focus in Europe and Africa regions (on initiatives linked to outcome 7), and Asia and the Pacific and Africa regions (under outcome 3).

## Interviews

Additional interviews will be held<sup>310</sup> with a broad range of stakeholders:

- ▶ ILO staff and senior management in Geneva
- ▶ High level representatives of employers and workers (i.e., IOE and ITUC)
- ▶ ILO regional and country office staff
- ▶ International partners and other UN organisations collaborating with the ILO on COVID-19 related initiatives
- ▶ Country level stakeholders (governments, workers' and employers' organisations).

Country offices, both in the narrow range of selected case study countries and in a wider range of countries with potentially interesting exemplars, will be invited to submit suggestions of key people to interview. These will include ILO staff in regional offices, directors of Country Offices and DWTs, enterprise and other specialists, and CTA/project staff working on projects related to this outcome. In addition, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, government officials, and other partners will be identified. In some cases, project beneficiaries may also be interviewed.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 related restrictions, it will not be possible for the international evaluation team members to undertake country visits for this evaluation. It will therefore be necessary to conduct interviews remotely (via MS Teams). National consultants will also be used to conduct interviews (in person where feasible or via MS Teams).

While this approach may limit the depth of analysis to some extent and prevent first-hand observation of ILO's work on the ground, it will allow the evaluation team to broaden its geographic focus and to include more interviewees than might normally be covered in an HLE.

Interviews will be semi-structured based on the evaluation matrix and guided by tailored questions. Country-specific data collection templates will be developed by the international evaluation consultants to guide the work of national consultants. The results of all interviews will be summarised in an internal team document for cross-referencing.

## Surveys

A survey based on the evaluation questions will be developed and sent via SurveyMonkey to all the people mentioned above. The recipients of the scoping survey will also be included to gather more in-depth data on their perceptions of ILO performance in responding to the pandemic.

## Case studies

The evaluation will collect data and information from all five regions including via interviews/ consultations/ desk reviews, covering close to 10 countries representing all ILO regions. In some cases, it may be necessary to rely on national consultants as described above but their availability is not a criterion for choosing countries.

The criteria for selecting countries to visit or to gather more in-depth information about processes, dynamics and results were:

- ▶ Coverage of all regions
- ▶ Coverage of all Focus Areas (as per the Theory of Change) and a range of key policy/program intervention types within these
- ▶ A mix of "crisis response actions" and "recovery actions" (as per the Theory of Change)
- ▶ A mix of successful and unsuccessful interventions
- ▶ Quality and availability of documentation

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<sup>310</sup> Note that interviews conducted in the inception phase also took the opportunity to gather information for the evaluation itself.

- ▶ Any evidence of 'evaluation fatigue' (i.e. the HLE may avoid some countries where constituents have been the subject of several recent evaluations)
- ▶ Analysis of expenditure (XBDC, RBSA, RBTC) for the 2020-21 biennium and programme results dashboard
- ▶ Scale of projects and budgets

During the inception phase consultations and through the scoping survey, we asked all informants for suggestions of countries with interesting projects or with the potential to inform future actions. That produced a rather long list, which was analysed using the above criteria resulting in the final selection below in **Table 5**. A summary of the process is included at Annex G:

**TABLE 4: CASE STUDY SELECTION MATRIX**

Region	Country	Focus Area	Approach	Activities to be examined <sup>311</sup>
ASIA-PACIFIC	Viet Nam	Protection of Workers	In-person interviews & desk-based analysis <sup>312</sup>	VZF/BW collaboration, garment sector, training for constituents, social dialogue-electronics, enterprise, as well as UN/global response
	Indonesia	Protection of Workers, Employment, Social Protection, Just Transition	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Gender and Inclusion; UN coordination; COVID enterprise & OSH project, VZF/BW/SocPro (BMZ) MPTF MSME/skills evaluation, Just transition
	Thailand	Protection of Workers, Social Protection, Gender Equality	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Social protection: Migrant workers (non-discrimination) Tourism - as a social protection intervention
AFRICA	Madagascar	Employment, Protection of Workers, Social Protection, Contribution to UN, Gender	Interviews & desk-based analysis	OSH, protection in garments and construction, building capacity of the MoL
	South Africa	Inclusive economic growth and employment	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Employment, Entreprises, Skills, OSH, social dialogue
AMERICAS	Argentina	Protection of workers and just transition	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Institutional response to COVID-19,
	Mexico	Protection of workers, Social Dialogue, Just transition	Interviews and desk-based analysis	OSH, Gender, Just transition and VZF
ARAB STATES	Iraq	Inclusive economic growth and employment	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Labour market institutions, job creation, SME resilience, social protection
EUROPE	Western Balkans cluster	UN coordination	Interviews & desk-based analysis	Financing for development, role of NC, UN Coordination and engagement
TOPICAL Case Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Social Dialogue</li> <li>▶ Capacity building (ITC and CINTERFOR)</li> <li>▶ Knowledge management and research (inc. policy guides, ILO Monitor, et. Al.)</li> <li>▶ Role of Standards – Seafarers/Maritime Sectoral Study</li> <li>▶ UN reform and engagement with partners</li> <li>▶ Green Jobs and Just Transition</li> </ul>			

311 Further areas of study will be added as data collection progresses

312 A selection of these case studies will benefit from a national/regional evaluation consultant who may undertake in-person visits and interviews.

TABLE 5: DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Evaluation questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources of data
<b>Relevance:</b>		
<b>Dimension A: Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner</b>		
1. Did the ILO have any <b>policies, procedures and contingency plans</b> in place prior to the onset of the pandemic that helped prepare it for the crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Existence of documented policies, procedures, plans relevant to pandemic response.</li> <li>▶ If none, other crisis management approaches used.</li> </ul>	Interviews, documented plans/policies, survey Other procedures/decisions made Interviews (HQ and regions)
2. To what extent did ILO's <b>programme and policy frameworks</b> (P&B and DWCPs) remain relevant to the new circumstances?	▶ 2020-21 P&B reported effects on performance and adaptations; 2022-23 P&B comparison	P&Bs, performance reports/ dashboard Management and staff (including PROGRAM and regional planners) Interviewee accounts of relevance of P&Bs and DWCPs/ CPOs in the new circumstances
3. How did the ILO <b>adapt its management approach</b> (in HQ and in the field) in response to uncertainty and unpredictable change in the early stages of the pandemic? Were these adaptations relevant, effective and timely?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Examples of adaptive management approaches used in crisis phase</li> <li>▶ Examples of responsiveness and flexibility to integrate emerging lessons from the field?</li> <li>▶ Details of diversity of regional approaches used, global program adaptations.</li> </ul>	ILO senior management (HQ and regions) Survey results Case studies
4. How well has the ILO <b>engaged with constituents</b> and responded to their needs in framing the organisation's response to the pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ILO and constituent accounts of engagement</li> <li>▶ Examples of practical responses</li> </ul>	Interviews with ACTRAV, ACTEMP, Employers' and Workers organisations (HQ and field) Survey results
<b>Dimension B: Policy action at national, regional and global levels</b>		
5. <b>What changed</b> that required an ILO response (e.g. needs, circumstances, priorities; including global, regional, national differences)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Findings of global, regional and country analysis</li> <li>▶ Changes to country and global results frameworks</li> </ul>	Global, regional and country level analyses and assessments Dashboard data and reports requested from relevant Departments
6. <b>How were responses to these changes developed</b> (including role of social dialogue and tripartism; changes in response to analysis/ data on new circumstances; support for national, regional, global/UN COVID-19 plans/strategies)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Any documented accounts of processes described</li> <li>▶ Constituent views on process</li> <li>▶ Engagement of ILO in high-level policy-making bodies</li> </ul>	Official documents (ILO, UN), interviews with constituents, policy departments, field staff, UNCTs Survey results, country/thematic case studies
7. What <b>actions</b> did the ILO take to address decent work deficits caused or worsened by the pandemic? How were <b>existing programmes</b> adapted? What <b>new interventions</b> were established? What was the focus of these actions (i.e. crisis response, preparing for recovery)?	▶ Reported activities relevant to the HLE's defined Focus Areas	P&B Implementation Reports, performance dashboards, interviews, review of policy papers/guides, survey results, synthesis review, country/ thematic case studies

Evaluation questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources of data
8. Were actions underpinned by a sound program logic and theory of change that reflected the new circumstances?	▶ Extent to which ILO data enabled activities to be revised to meet new DW needs/evidence of revisions at level of CPO or individual activities	CPO documents and revisions, new project documents, survey results, synthesis review
9. <b>Moving forward</b> , what policy and programme actions will the ILO need to prioritise to maximise relevance?	▶ Constituent feedback on needs, UN priorities and development plans	Constituent and ILO staff interviews

**Coherence:**

**Dimension A: Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner**

10. How well has the ILO <b>coordinated its response</b> across HQ departments and between HQ and the field to ensure an adaptable and timely response?	▶ Feedback from HQ and field ▶ Alignment of activities to P&B and response framework	Interviews, Programme Implementation Reports, survey results
11. To what extent do the ILO and its <b>partners</b> have a shared understanding of their respective roles in responding to COVID-19 effects in the world of work?	▶ Recorded targeting and early results of new activities conducted through partnerships	ILO and partner documents, interviews, GB reports, survey results
12. To what extent is the ILO's <b>response to COVID-19 aligned</b> to the principles enshrined in the ILO Global Call to Action, the <b>Centenary Declaration, key ILO conventions</b> , and <b>emerging concerns</b> as expressed in GB/ILC discussions?	▶ Alignment with these policy instruments	Interviews, performance dashboards, synthesis review

**Dimension B: Policy action at national, regional and global levels**

13. How well have the ILO's actions in response to the pandemic cohered/ created <b>synergies across the different Focus Areas</b> ?	▶ Evidence of collaboration between different parts of the organisation	Documented collaborations, reported results, interviews, survey results, country/thematic case studies
14. How well have the ILO's actions complemented similar efforts carried out by <b>other development actors, UN agencies and national governments</b> ?	▶ Extent to which country programmes revised during Covid show complementarity rather than overlap	Interviews with UN partners from HQ to field level, UNCT country programme document, press releases, websites, etc.
15. What are the <b>positive synergies</b> between ILO interventions and between the ILO and other partners (constituents, national institutions, international financial institutions and UN development agencies)? Is there evidence of <b>obstacles and challenges</b> in relation to synergies?	▶ Increased number of agreements, extent to which agreements include confirmed funding, complementarity of skills and expertise in joint activities and partnerships.	UN documents from HQ to UNCT level, ILO reporting, interviews in ILO and with partners



Evaluation questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources of data
16. How well have the ILO's actions integrated its <b>normative and social dialogue mandate</b> and reflected its commitment to <b>gender equality, supporting vulnerable groups, and making a just transition</b> towards environmental sustainability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extent to which agreements, programmes and activities include specific measures advancing normative and social dialogue mandate and in targeting gender equality, inclusion, just transition and/or green jobs</li> </ul>	Documents of agreements, programmes and activities. Interviews with ILO staff in different locations and with partners, country/thematic case studies. Programming documents, funding agreements, financial reporting.

## Effectiveness

### Dimension A: Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner

17. Does the <b>current monitoring and reporting</b> (Outcome and indicators) allow for tracking the progress and informing the ILOs strategy to respond to the effects of COVID-19 in the world of work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extent to which monitoring frameworks have been implemented. Accuracy of estimates of resources needed to monitor progress beyond expenditure</li> </ul>	Agreement, programme and activity documents outlining monitoring approaches and requirements. Tracking mechanisms against monitoring commitments.
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### Dimension B: Policy action at national, regional and global levels

18. Were actions (including at global, regional and national levels) effective in addressing the <b>decent work deficits caused or worsened</b> by the pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reported results against P&amp;B targets (where relevant)</li> <li>▶ Synthesis review findings</li> <li>▶ Constituent and stakeholder perceptions of effectiveness of actions</li> </ul>	Programme Implementation Reports (including narrative), outcome-based workplans, interviews, survey responses, synthesis review
19. Has the ILO been able to apply <b>innovative approaches</b> for an effective and timely action to mitigate the immediate effects of the pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Use made and outputs of innovations such as Labour Market Assessment at country level. Engagement in short term measures outside of normal ILO activities (e.g., cash transfers)</li> </ul>	Reported country level follow-up assessments, reports of policy developments involving ILO or in response to its outputs, evaluations of effectiveness of ILO involvement in non-traditional intervention areas (if available), country/thematic case studies
20. <b>Did certain groups benefit</b> from ILO response interventions <b>more than others</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evidence of specific benefits to women, vulnerable groups, migrants etc</li> </ul>	Disaggregated data on participation and outcomes. country/thematic case studies, dashboard results

## Efficiency

### Dimension A: Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner

21. How well have the ILO's <b>resource mobilization</b> efforts supported its capacity to deliver an adaptable and timely response?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ New funds mobilized to address COVID effects</li> <li>▶ Speed of implementation</li> </ul>	Financial reports (including analysis of budget re-allocations), new project funding sourced, country case studies
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### Dimension B: Policy action at national, regional and global levels

22. How well were <b>existing resources</b> (including development cooperation project funds) adjusted to address the circumstances brought about by the pandemic in a timely way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evidence of successful re-purposing of existing activities to address COVID effects</li> </ul>	Programme Implementation Reports, dashboards, interviews
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Evaluation questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources of data
23. Were <b>financial and human resources adequate</b> for the response and were they used efficiently?	▶ Analysis of sources and uses of funds by budget category, findings of synthesis review, perception of constituents/stakeholders of the efficiency and appropriateness of budget allocation processes	Financial reports, reports to GB, synthesis review, survey results, interviews
24. Were actions <b>cost effective</b> ?		
<b>Impact &amp; Sustainability</b>		
<b>Dimension A: Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner</b>		
25. To what extent has ILO improved its ability to respond in programme and policy terms to future crisis?	▶ Evidence of changes to ILO's procedures and risk management approach	Documented policy, procedural and risk management changes
26. Do ILO results frameworks integrate recovery response in a sustainable manner?	▶ Extent to which results-based management system records and monitors pandemic response measures over time	P&B, dashboards, documented planning and monitoring approach to recovery actions
<b>Dimension B: Policy action at national, regional and global levels</b>		
27. What are the different <b>effects</b> that actions have had / are likely to have in <b>addressing the decent work deficits</b> caused/worsened by the pandemic, and what actions are necessary to sustain them? To what extent is the strategy and action <b>benefiting the intended beneficiaries and national policies</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reported country level uptake and institutionalisation of new approaches introduced as a result of ILO COVID response</li> <li>▶ Constituent perceptions of impact/likely impact</li> </ul>	Survey responses, interviews, synthesis review, reported results, country/thematic case studies
28. To what extent has the ILO <b>strengthened capacities</b> of governments, workers and employers organizations' representatives so they can better serve the needs of their members and participate in social partnership for COVID-19 response and recovery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Constituent perception of strengthened capacity.</li> <li>▶ New approaches and policies adopted and capacity and resources to sustain these</li> </ul>	Interviews, reports to GB, survey results
29. To what extent have the projects made/are likely to make progress as part of the COVID-19 response of the ILO in advancing <b>cross-cutting issues</b> of standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender equality and non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability?	▶ Extent that all cross-cutting issues have received equal support	Interviews, reports to GB, survey results, country/thematic case studies
30. Do the ILO interventions <b>include long-term strategies</b> to ensure up-scaling and sustainability of results for a human-centred future of work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reported country level uptake and institutionalisation of new approaches introduced as a result of ILO COVID response</li> <li>▶ Evidence of new arrangements, partnerships and funding being put in place to support the scaling up of work implemented or given new prominence as a result of the pandemic</li> </ul>	Survey responses, interviews, synthesis review, reported results, country/thematic case studies

Evaluation questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources of data
<b>Lessons &amp; good practice</b>		
31. What are the emerging lessons and good practices for future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identified areas of success and any lost opportunities</li> <li>▶ Factors contributing to success or to disappointing results</li> <li>▶ Perception of staff, constituents and stakeholders on how ILO support could be improved</li> <li>▶ Extent the ILO's crisis response approach procedures during the pandemic should be formalised and used as the basis for future crisis responses</li> </ul>	Interviews, survey responses, Synthesis Review

▶ Annex D: Results of staff and constituent  
surveys

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Annex is available upon request

▶ **Annex E: Financial analysis**

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Annex is available upon request

## ▶ Annex F: Theory of Change

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Annex is accessible here: <https://www.ilo.org/eval/lang--en/index.htm>

## ► Annex G: ILO COVID-19 policy publications

List of key policy products published and organised around the four pillars of the ILO policy framework to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic in the world of work (as of 29 October 2021):

1. Overarching Policy Brief: [“A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis”](#) (May 18) (POL)

### Pillar 1: Stimulating the Economy and Employment

2. [“ILO Monitor 8”](#) (EMPLOYMENT led coordination) (October 27 2021)
3. Working Paper: [Financing human-centred COVID-19 recovery and decisive climate action worldwide: International cooperation’s twenty-first century moment of truth](#) (RESEARCH) (7 October 2021)
4. [World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future.](#) (SOCPRO) (September 1)
5. [Building Forward Fairer: Women’s rights to work and at work at the core of the COVID-19 recovery](#) (WORKQUALITY/GEDI in cooperation with EMPLOYMENT and STATISTICS) (July 16)
6. [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021](#) (RESEARCH) (2nd June 2021)
7. [An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis](#) (EMPLOYMENT/EMPLAB) (1st June 2021)
8. [Results report from online survey of enterprises on Training and Development of Employees, Apprentices and Interns during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS) (25 May 2021)
9. [How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective, Vol III](#) (STATISTICS) (April 29th 2021)
10. Brief: [“COVID-19 and multinational enterprises: Impacts on FDI, trade and decent work in Asia and the Pacific”](#) (RESEARCH and ILO Bangkok) (8 April 2021)
11. [How to assess fiscal stimulus packages from a gender equality perspective](#) (EMPLAB, with UN WOMEN) (March 31 2021)
12. [Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery](#) (EMPLAB, with UN WOMEN) (March 31 2021)
13. [A guide to public investments in the care economy](#) (EMPLAB, with UN WOMEN) (March 31 2021)
14. [World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work](#) (RESEARCH) (February 23)
15. [Skills development in the time of COVID-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training](#) (EMP/SKILLS, with UNESCO and the World Bank) (February 1st)
16. [“ILO Monitor 7”](#) (EMPLOYMENT led coordination) (January 25)
17. Report: [Career guidance policy & practice in the pandemic: Results of a joint international survey”](#) (EMP/SKILLS) (January 18)
18. [From Crisis to Opportunity: A joint perspective on responding to the health, employment and peacebuilding challenges in times of COVID-19](#) (DEVINVEST/EMPLOYMENT) (A joint publication with WHO, DPPA and InterPeace) (17 December 2020)
19. [COVID-19, jobs and the future of work in the LDCs: A \(disheartening\) preliminary account.](#) (EMPLAB) (15 December 2020)
20. [“E-Learning Lab on Digital TVET training”](#) *This is a hands-on and practical online course developed in collaboration with ITC-ILO specifically targeting at the needs of TVET Institutions and Trainers to bring TVET training online. (ILO-ITC) (EMP/SKILLS* (Course 1 (6-31 July) and Course 2 (5-30 October).
21. [“Financing gaps in social protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond”](#), by Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar, Hazel Elizondo-Barboza. Working Paper No.14. ILO, Geneva.
22. Research Brief: [“The supply chain ripple effect: How Covid-19 is affecting garment workers and factories in Asia and the Pacific”](#) (GOVERNANCE/BETTERWORK, ROAP/RESA, ROAP/DWGSC) (October 21)

23. [“Lessons from the pandemic- building better gender data for the future”](#) (STATISTICS) (October 20)
24. [“Report VIII: Closing gender data gaps in the world of work – role of the 19th ICLS standards”](#) (STATISTICS) (October 13)
25. [“Gender relevance of the 19th ICLS statistical standards”](#) (STATISTICS) (October 13)
26. [“NATURE HIRES: How nature-based solutions can power a green jobs recovery”](#) (EMPLOYMENT in collaboration with the WWF) (October 12)
27. [“National employment policies for an inclusive, job-rich recovery from the COVID-19 crisis”](#) (EMPLOYMENT) (September 30)
28. [“ILO Monitor 6”](#) (EMPLOYMENT led coordination) (September 23)
29. [Financing gaps in social protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond](#) (SOCPRO) (September 17)
30. [How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective”. Vol II](#) (Committee of Coordination of Statistical Activities, CCSA- STATISTICS) (September 2020)
31. [Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being.](#) (EMPLOYMENT) (August 11)
32. [Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being.](#) [Executive summary] (EMPLOYMENT) (August 11)
33. [Guidelines on Rapid Assessment of reskilling and upskilling needs in response to the COVID-19 crisis](#) (SKILLS) (August 7)
34. [“Macro policy options to stimulate pandemic-hit economies”](#) (RESEARCH) (July 30th)
35. [“A gender-responsive employment recovery: Building back fairer”](#) (EMPLAB) (July 24)
36. [“ILO Monitor 5”](#) (EMPLOYMENT led coordination) (June 30)
37. [“COVID-19 and global supply chains: How the jobs crisis propagates across borders”](#) (RESEARCH/ EMPLOYMENT) (June 29)
38. [“Delivering income and employment support in times of COVID-19: Integrating cash transfers with active labour market policies”](#) (RESEARCH/EMPLOYMENT) (June 18)
39. [“Defining and measuring remote work, telework, work at home and home-based work”](#) (5 June) (STATISTICS)
40. [ILO Monitor 4](#) (EMPLOYMENT lead coordination) (May 27)
41. Statistical guide on [“Capturing impact on employment and unpaid work using rapid surveys in COVID-19 Crisis”](#) (STATISTICS) (May 24)
42. Jayati Ghosh, [“How to finance social protection in developing countries in the age of COVID-19”](#) (part of the brief on Financing Social Protection in Developing Countries) (SOCPRO) (May 13)
43. [“Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy and Labour Market”](#) (EMPLOYMENT) (May 5)
44. Technical note on COVID-19 guidance for labour statistics data collection- [“Essential labour force survey content and treatment of special groups”](#) (STATISTICS) (April 30)
45. Technical note on COVID-19 guidance for labour statistics data collection-[“Guidance to data producers to maintain labour force survey data collection”](#) (STATISTICS) (April 29)
46. [“How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective”. Vol I](#) (Committee of Coordination of Statistical Activities, CCSA- STATISTICS) (April 2020)
47. ILO action in LDCs and fragile countries during the crisis: Policy Brief on [“Coping with double casualties: How to support the working poor in situations of fragility in response to COVID-19”](#) (EMPLOYMENT/ DEVINVEST) (April 29)
48. [ILO Monitor 3](#) (EMPLOYMENT lead coordination) (April 29)
49. COVID-19 impact on the collection of labour market statistics (STATISTICS) (April 21)
50. [ILO Monitor 2](#) (EMPLOYMENT lead coordination) (April 7)



51. [“Rapid Social Protection Calculator”](#)-a tool for ILO specialists, constituents and others as a way of calculating cost of social protection transfers being rolled out (SOCPRO) (April 2)
52. [ILO Monitor 1](#) (EMPLOYMENT lead coordination) (March 18)

## **Pillar 2: Supporting Enterprises, Jobs and Incomes**

53. [Keeping labour data flowing during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (STATISTICS) (30 September 2021)
54. [Research Brief: The post-COVID-19 garment industry in Asia](#) (BETTERWORK) (16 July 2021) \*The Research Brief is based on an academic paper that has been published in the ILO-IFC Better Work Discussion Paper series: DP 43 Repeat Repair or Renegotiate (betterwork.org).
55. [Research Brief: Implications of pandemic challenges on the corporate policies and practices, in particular Human Resource Management](#) (RESEARCH) (19 May 2021)
56. [COVID-19 Tackling the Jobs crisis in the Least Developed Countries](#) (EMP/EMPLAB) (January 18)
57. [Global Wage Report 2020-21](#) (WORKQUALITY/INWORK) (December 2)
58. [“Why settle for recovery? A guidance note on building back better micro & small enterprises and resilient market systems during crisis and after lockdown”](#) (ENTERPRISES) (October 12)
59. [“Conducting COVID-19 impact assessment surveys: Guidelines and template”](#) (ENTERPRISES) (September 30)
60. [Unemployment protection in the COVID-19 crisis. Country responses and policy considerations](#) (SOCPRO) (September 15) (Published in English. French and Spanish versions will be published soon)
61. [Answering key questions around informality in micro and small enterprises during the COVID-19 crisis](#) (ENTERPRISES) (September 14)
62. [Extending social protection to informal workers in the COVID-19 crisis: country responses and policy considerations](#) (SOCPRO) (September 8) (Published in English. French and Spanish versions will be published soon)
63. Policy Brief: A guidance note on building back better micro & small enterprises and resilient market systems during crisis and after lockdown (ENT/SME)
64. [COVID-19: Public employment services and labour market policy responses](#) (EMP/EMPLAB) (August 17)
65. [COVID-19: Impact on Trade and Employment in Developing Countries](#) (EMPLOYMENT) (August 12)
66. [COVID-19 and the world of work: Jump-starting a green recovery with more and better jobs, healthy and resilient societies](#) (ENTERPRISES) (July 16)
67. [“Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and the Post- COVID-19 Rapid Response”](#) (ENTERPRISES) (July 7)
68. [“The effects of COVID-19 on trade and global supply chains”](#) (RESEARCH) (June 3)
69. [“The role of public employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes in COVID-19 policy responses”](#) (EMP/DEVINVEST) (May 29)
70. [“Preventing exclusion from the labour market: Tackling the COVID-19 youth employment crisis”](#) (EMP) (27 May)
71. [“Employment-Intensive Investment Programme \(EIIP\) Guidance-Technical note on water, sanitation and health \(WASH\) interventions in response to COVID-19”](#) (EMP/DEVINVEST) (May 14)
72. [“Skills for Employment Policy Brief - Distance and Online Learning during the time of COVID-19”](#) (EMP) (May 4)
73. [“Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on enterprises and workers in the informal economy in developing and emerging countries”](#) (INWORK led Task Team) (April 30)
74. [“Guide for enterprises on responsible restructuring” as an important element in business continuity planning and execution while protecting workers.](#) (ENT) (April 24)
75. Policy Brief for governments on [“Interventions to support enterprises during the corona virus pandemic and recovery”](#) (ENTERPRISES) (April 16)
76. Sectoral Tool: [“Garment Industry: Managing Transitions and retrenchment legal guidance for enterprises at country level”](#) (BW/ GOVERNANCE) (April)
77. [Business Continuity Digital Training Programme](#) (ENT/ ITC TURIN) (April 8)

**Pillar 3: Protecting Workers in the Workplace**

78. [An uneven and gender-unequal COVID-19 recovery: Update on gender and employment trends 2021](#) (EMPLAB/EMPLOYMENT) (26 October 2021)
79. [Impact of COVID-19 on nexus between climate change and labour migration in selected South Asian countries: An exploratory study](#) (ilo.org) (WORKQUALITY/MIGRANT) (14 October 2021)
80. [Prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 in the informal economy through safety and health: An action-oriented tool for supporting street and market vendors](#) (14 October 2021) (LABADMIN/OSH)
81. [Application of key labour law provisions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation](#) (26 October 2021) (LABADMIN/OSH)
82. Fair recruitment: [Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment](#) (WORKQUALITY) (30th September 2021)
83. [Preventing and mitigating COVID-19 at work - joint publication WHO/ILO](#) (19 May 2021) (LABADMIN/OSH)
84. [Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises - Invest Now in Resilient Occupational Safety and Health Systems - World Day for Safety and Health Report](#) (14 April 2021)
85. [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#) (NORMES) (14th April 2021) – this document is an update. The publication was originally issued on May 29 2020.
86. [Protecting workers: occupational safety and health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (17th April) (GOVERNANCE / LABADMIN/OSH)
87. [An inclusive digital economy for people with disabilities](#) (WORKQUALITY/GED) (February 11 2021)
88. [Information Note on Maritime Labour Issues and COVID-19 - Revised version 3.0](#) (NORMES/SECTOR) (February 3 '21)
89. [Interim Guidance - COVID-19: Occupational health and safety for health workers](#) (February 2 '21) (SECTOR, a joint ILO – WHO publication)
90. [Protecting the life and health of workers during the COVID19 pandemic: overview of national legislative and policy responses](#) (RESEARCH) (January 26)
91. [Working from home: From invisibility to decent work](#) (WORKQUALITY/INWORK) (13 January)
92. [Towards solid social protection floors? The role of non-contributory provision during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond](#) (SOCPRO) (January 2021)
93. [Employment and decent work in refugee and other forced displacement contexts](#) (WORKQUALITY/MIGRANT) (3rd December 2020)
94. [COVID-19 and logging: Prevention and control checklist](#) (SECTOR in collaboration with FAO Forestry Department) (22 December 2020)
95. [The Migrant Pay Gap : Understanding wage differences between migrants and nationals](#) (December 14)
96. [COVID-19 Action Checklist for the Construction Industry](#) (GOVERNANCE/LABADMIN) (December)
97. [A Covid-19 Action Checklist for the Waste Collection Sector](#) (GOVERNANCE/LABADMIN) (December 2)
98. ["Issue paper on COVID-19 and fundamental principles and rights at work"](#) (GOVERNANCE/FUNDAMENTALS) (7 October)
99. [Building back better for women: Women's dire position in the informal economy](#) (WORKQUALITY/GED) (September 15)
100. [Hand hygiene at the workplace: an essential occupational safety and health prevention and control measure against COVID-19](#) (8 September – SECTOR/ LABADMIN/OSH)
101. [Promoting public health measures in response to COVID-19 on non-passenger ships](#) (with WHO and IMO); (SECTOR; 25 August).
102. [Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism](#) (with UNWTO as lead agency; lead unit SECTOR) (August 25)
103. [Promoting public health measures in response to COVID-19 on cargo ships and fishing vessels](#) (WHO publication produced with inputs from the ILO secretariat) (SECTOR; 25 August)
104. [COVID-19 and accommodation food service activities: Prevention and control checklist](#) (SECTOR and LABADMIN/OSH) (25 August)
105. [Prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at work for small and medium-sized enterprises: Action Checklist](#) (LABADMIN/OSH, VZF/SCORE) (21 August)

106. [A practical guide: Practical Guide on Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond](#) (ilo.org) (WORKQUALITY) (July 16)
107. [COVID-19 and health facilities: Checklist of measures to be taken in health facilities](#) (SECTOR) (July 15)
108. [Information note on maritime labour issues and coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Revised version 2.0](#) (NORMES, SECTOR) (July 10)
109. [Information note on the Occupational Safety and Health \(Dock Work\) Convention, 1979 \(No. 152\) and coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) (SECTOR and NORMES) (July 6)
110. [Social protection for migrant workers: A necessary response to the COVID-19 crisis. Policy brief with concrete recommendations for policy makers and social partners.](#) (title revised) (SOCPRO/MIGRANT/ISSA) (June 24)
111. [Managing work-related psychosocial risks during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (ILO tool-kit on COVID-19 and OSH) (GOVERNANCE) (June 22)
112. [Ensuring fair recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (WORKQUALITY/MIGRANT and FUNDAMENTALS) (June 23)
113. [Protecting the rights at work of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (WORKQUALITY/MIGRANT) (June 19)
114. [Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts – A toolkit for school leaders](#) (produced by UNESCO, ILO, and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030); (SECTOR; June 17)
115. [Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on loss of jobs and hours among domestic workers](#) (WORKQUALITY) (June 16)
116. [COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act](#) (GOV/FUNDAMENTALS) (June 12)
117. [COVID-19 and the world of work: Ensuring no one is left behind in the response and recovery](#) (Leaving no one behind toolkit-Overview Brief) (WORKQUALITY) (June 9)
118. [COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on people living with HIV](#) (Leaving no one behind toolkit) (WORKQUALITY) (June 8)
119. [ILO Mining COVID-19 prevention and control checklist \(Stop COVID-19 at work! Control and prevention tools for specific sectors"](#) (SECTOR) (June 5)
120. [COVID-19 and the World of Work: Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities at all stages of the response](#) (Leaving no one behind toolkit) (WORKQUALITY) (June 4)
121. [COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples](#) (Leaving no one behind toolkit) (WORKQUALITY) (June 3)
122. ILO Standards and COVID-19 (coronavirus) (NORMES) (May 29 2020)
123. [Seasonal Migrant Workers' Schemes: Rethinking Fundamental Principles and Mechanisms in light of COVID-19](#) (WORKQUALITY) (May 21)
124. [A safe and healthy return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) *A guidance note that aims to assist governments and employers' and workers' organizations in developing national policy guidance for a phased and safe return to work* (GOVERNANCE) (May 21)
125. ["A Safe Return to Work: Ten Action Points"](#) (GOVERNANCE) (May 21)
126. ["Social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries: Strengthening resilience by building universal social protection"](#) (SOCPRO) (May 14)
127. [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019](#) (No. 190): 12 ways it can support the COVID-19 response and recovery (WORKQUALITY) (May 14)
128. ["Sickness benefits during sick leave and quarantine: Country responses and policy considerations in the context of COVID-19"](#) (SOCPRO) (May 14)
129. ["Addressing stigma and discrimination in the COVID-19 response: Key lessons from the response to HIV and AIDS"](#) (WORKQUALITY) (May 14)
130. ["The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work"](#) (WORKQUALITY) (May 11)
131. ["COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges"](#) (May 7)
132. ["Beyond contagion or starvation: Giving domestic workers another way forward"](#) (ILO tool-kit on COVID-19 and Leaving No-one Behind in the World of Work) (WORKQUALITY) (May 7)

133. [“Working from Home: Estimating the worldwide potential”](#) (May 7)
134. [“Impact of lockdown measures on the informal economy”](#) (WORKQUALITY) (May 5)
135. [ILO Generic Terms of Reference for Rapid Assessments of the Impact of COVID-19 on Socio-Economic Environments of Refugee-Hosting Communities](#) (PROSPECTS) (May)
136. [Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts: Guidance for policy-makers](#) (produced by UNESCO, ILO, and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030); (SECTOR; May 2020)
137. [“Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic”](#) (WORKQUALITY/MIGRANT) (April 30)
138. [“In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work”](#)- 2020 Safe Day report on OSH with comprehensive information on the OSH challenges related to COVID-19 (GOVERNANCE//LABADMIN/OSH) (April 28). Following articles also appeared as part of the Safe Day resources:
  - o [The COVID-19 crisis may lead to mental health issues for many workers](#), Lode Godderis (April 28)
  - o [Good jobs to minimize the impact of Covid-19 on health inequity](#), Lode Godderis (April 20)
  - o [Work at the Sharp End: Human factors/ergonomics for protecting healthcare workers and patients](#), Sara Albolino & Kathleen Mosier (April 20)
  - o [Work from home: Human factors/ergonomics considerations for teleworking](#), Michelle M. Robertson & Kathleen Mosier (April 20)
  - o [Covid-19: How do OSH professionals impact public-policy?](#), Richard Jones (April 20)
  - o [The new world battleground with Covid-19: Challenges, partnerships, impact and business](#), Chris Laszcz-Davis (April 20)
139. [“Social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis: Country responses and policy considerations”](#) (SOCPRO) (April 22)
140. [Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at Work ACTION CHECKLIST](#) (GOVERNANCE) (April 16)
141. [“Persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 response”](#) (ILO tool-kit on COVID-19 and Leaving No-one Behind in the World of Work) (April 8)
142. [Family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19: Key steps employers can take](#) (ENTERPRISES) (April 2)
143. “Social Protection Monitor: Social Protection Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis around the World” (SOCPRO) (updated weekly)
144. [“COVID-19 cruelly highlights inequalities and threatens to deepen them”](#) Policy Brief on Inequality and COVID-19 (WORKQUALITY) (March 30)
145. [Gender equality in the world of work: Towards a transformative and measureable agenda for more equal societies](#) (27 July 2020).
146. [Disability inclusion in company responses to COVID-19: Results of a survey among National Business and Disability Networks and their members](#) (9 July 2020).

**Pillar 4: Relying on Social Dialogue for Solutions**

147. [Social dialogue one year after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic: spotlight on outcomes](#) (GOVERNANCE) (14th June 2021)
148. [The role of social dialogue and the social partners in addressing the consequences of COVID-19 in the informal economy](#) (WORKQUALITY/GOVERNANCE) (October 29)  
[Peak-level social dialogue as a governance tool during the COVID-19 pandemic: Global and regional trends and policy issues](#) (GOVERNANCE) (October 26)
149. [“The role of social dialogue in formulating social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis”](#) (SOCPRO) (October 7)
150. [Social dialogue on occupational safety and health in the Covid-19 context](#) (August 26)  
[“Employers and workers negotiating measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect livelihoods and support recovery: A review of practice”](#) (WORKQUALITY, NORMES, GOVERNANCE) (July 3)
151. [The need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis](#) (GOVERNANCE) (May 4)

**Sectoral briefs (All four pillars)**

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152. COVID-19 and [the port sector](#) (July 5; SECTOR)
153. [COVID-19 and the meat processing sector](#) (9 February, 21; SECTOR)
154. [Impact of COVID-19 on the construction sector](#) (25 January; SECTOR)
155. [COVID-19 and care workers providing home or institution-based care](#) (15 October)
156. [COVID-19 and urban passenger transport services](#) (1 October; SECTOR)
157. [COVID-19 and the media and culture sector](#) (July 10; SECTOR)
158. [Impact of COVID-19 on the forest sector](#) (June 30; SECTOR)
159. COVID-19 and [road transport](#) (June 3; SECTOR);
160. COVID-19 and the [education](#) sector (April 20; SECTOR);
161. COVID-19 and [maritime shipping and fishing](#) (April 20; SECTOR);
162. COVID-19 and [the Public Service](#) (June 17)
163. COVID-19 and the impact on [agriculture and food security](#) (April 20; SECTOR);
164. COVID-19 and the [health](#) sector (April 15; SECTOR);
165. COVID-19 and the [tourism](#) sector (April 12; SECTOR);
166. COVID-19 and [civil aviation](#) (April 12; SECTOR);
167. [COVID-19 and public emergency services](#) (May 11; SECTOR) ;
168. [COVID-19 and food retail](#) (April 9; SECTOR);
169. COVID-19 and the [automotive industry](#) (May 7; SECTOR) ;
170. COVID-19 and [the textiles, clothing, leather and footwear industries](#) (April 9; SECTOR)

## ► Annex H: HLE Terms of Reference

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### INTRODUCTION

#### High-level evaluation

High Level Evaluations (HLE) are governance level evaluations that aim to generate insights into organizational level performance within the context of the results-based management system. The High Level evaluations in the ILO refer to evaluation of policy outcomes, institutional issues as well as selected Decent Work Country Programmes. Findings from HLEs contribute to high level decision-making on policies and strategies, and accountability. Senior management and the Governing Body are involved in identifying priorities for HLEs, determining the timing and intended uses of each evaluation. To this end a process of informal consultations including governments, through regional coordinators, and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups on the topics for high-level strategic evaluations and their terms of reference is organized annually. ILO-EVAL, as an office with structural independence, is the custodian of the independence and transparency of the evaluation process. EVAL conducts a minimum of three high-level evaluations every year, based on a 3 yearly rolling work plan of upcoming evaluations, endorsed by the GB.

In November 2020, the Governing Body approved an HLE of the ILO's response to COVID-19, to be conducted in 2022. It also approved the recommendation to develop in a participatory manner an evaluative framework for the ILO's strategic response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work. In November 2021, the Governing Body endorsed EVAL's work plan for 2022, which includes the high level evaluation on ILOs response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

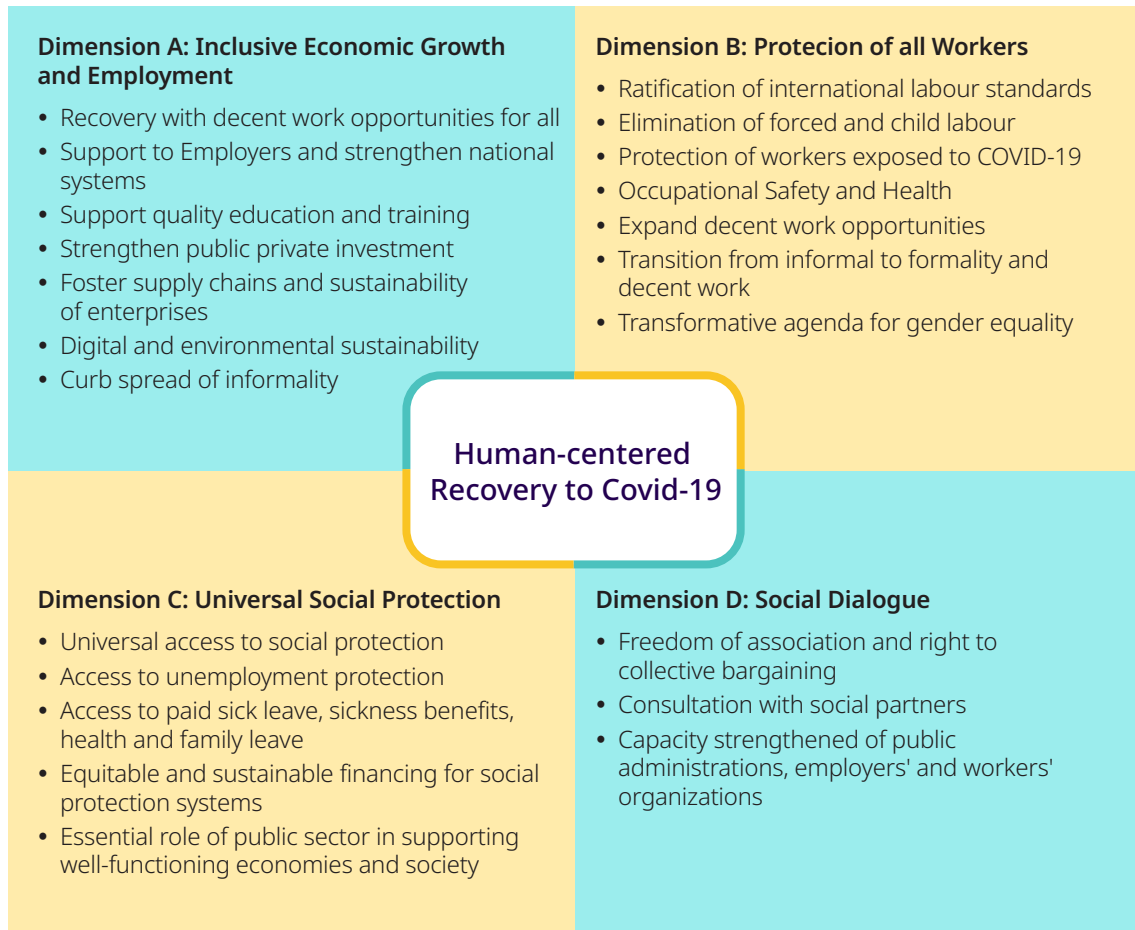
#### Strategic direction of the ILOs work on responding to COVID-19

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has plunged the world into a crisis of unprecedented scope and scale that has made the imperatives set out in the Centenary Declaration even more urgent as the international community engages in a collective endeavour to tackle the devastating human impact of the pandemic. While restoring global health remains the uppermost priority, it cannot be denied that the strict measures required have caused massive economic and social shocks.

The ILO has several key guidance at the strategic level to guide its work in supporting member States to react and recover from this pandemic. These are detailed below and should be considered as the overall context in which the ILO based its initial responses and future recovery efforts. Figure 1 illustrates the ILO's overall approach combining elements of the key guidance and strategic frameworks that have been produced.

In May 2020 the ILO produced a [four-pillar policy framework](#) that structured its key policy messages for response to the crisis. The four pillars are based upon the international labour standards that can serve as a "decent work compass" in the response to the COVID-19 crisis. First, upholding key provisions of these standards (particularly those dealing with safety and health, working arrangements, protection of specific categories of workers, non-discrimination, social security and employment protection) ensures that workers, employers and governments can maintain decent work while adjusting to the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. Second, a wide range of ILO standards – covering such areas as employment, social protection, wage protection, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, and workplace cooperation – contain specific guidance on policy measures that can be used to underpin a human-centred approach to management of the crisis and to recovery efforts.

**FIGURE 1: FOUR DIMENSIONS OF THE ILOS RESPONSE<sup>313</sup>**



Since 2020, the ILO's Governing Body has given the highest priority to the question of how the Organization can best contribute to the global recovery. The June 2021 International Labour Conference adopted a [Global Call to Action](#), outlining measures to create a human-centred recovery from the pandemic to avoid long-term scarring of economies and societies, building on the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the future of work](#) (2019) and its human-centred approach to the future of work. This Global Call to Action is the overall strategic guidance for the ILO.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, provides the foundation for a recovery from the crisis that is fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient and supports a just transition. The Declaration offers a positive vision and a road map for how countries can build forward better. It outlines its vision for accelerating its implementation through increased emphasis and investment and a priority of public policy, enterprise actions and international cooperation.

### **ILOs results framework**

The Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the ILO's Programme and Budget documents for 2020-21, and 2022-23, as well as the Strategic Plan for 2022-25 contain the key actions areas and related objectives and revised indicators of the ILOs work

313 Developed by EVAL based on the Global Call to Action.

in response to COVID-19.<sup>314</sup> Overall work and desired impact of ILO's policy and action at national, regional and global levels covers four Outcome areas:

- ▶ **Inclusive Economic Growth & Employment** (including ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth that creates productive employment and decent work; facilitating lifelong learning and labour market transitions; fostering an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and entrepreneurship)
- ▶ **Protection of all Workers** (including supporting Member States to act to uphold Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; ensuring workers are safe and healthy in the workplace)
- ▶ **Universal Social Protection** (including establishing social protection floors as a fundamental element of national social security systems)
- ▶ **Social dialogue and other cross-cutting Outcomes and ILO Contribution to UN/Global response and SDGs** (including shaping responses through social dialogue and tripartism, making a just transition towards environmental sustainability, "leaving no one behind" in terms of gender responsiveness and supporting vulnerable groups, advancing SDGs, UN framework for the socio-economic response, and development of partnerships)

A theory of change based on the results frameworks is being prepared by the evaluation team and will form the approach for the evaluation. Across these Outcome Areas, there is a broad range of policy actions and interventions relevant to COVID-19, which are covered across ILO departments/branches, as reflected in Figure 2 below.

**FIGURE 2: KEY ILO DEPARTMENTS SUPPORTING THE ILO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**



<sup>314</sup> The P&B 2022-23 and the SP 2022-25 should be considered for the formative aspect of the evaluation and on the criteria of relevance and sustainability.



## The UN response to COVID-19

The United Nations structured its response through three main plans: i) the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, coordinated by WHO and financed by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), ii) the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, coordinated by OCHA and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); and iii) the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (the UN Framework), which established the overarching structure for planning and programming of the UN development system response at country level to deliver rapid recovery.

In early April 2020 the UN Secretary General launched the Multi-Partner COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund (the Fund) for a period of two years. Led by UN Resident Coordinators, the goal of the Fund is to offer a cohesive UN System response to national governments through a common financing mechanism. UN entities, including ILO, have signed agreements with the Fund Secretariat. To deliver on the priorities laid out in the UN Framework, United Nations Country Teams elaborated Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plans (SERP). SERPs were finalized in 121 countries with estimated financing requirements of \$28.7 billion. As of October 2021, the contributions to the Fund hovered around 83 million dollars. Of this figure ILO received 6.5 million with a delivery rate of 32%. More recently the Secretary General has published his report titled "[Our Common Agenda](#)" which outlines an agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals. The document outlines 12 commitments. The commitments and the agenda are derived from the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Evaluation support to collecting evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response actions

The ILO Evaluation Office produced [guidance and operating procedures on adapting evaluations to the COVID-19](#) in March 2020 and in May 2021 [a protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILOs COVID-19 response measures](#). The protocol set out an evaluation framework to support a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the ILOs delivery in responding to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work. The evaluation framework was based on the four pillar framework described above.

The evaluation framework provides a model of "what" is to be evaluated based on the proposed ILO's four pillar policy framework. It also takes into account the adapted programme and budget 2020-21 indicators; revised project and programmes; lessons learned from past crises and interest areas on the organizational performance and effectiveness.

Based on the aforementioned framework, in 2021 EVAL commissioned a two-phased [synthesis review](#) to capture key findings from high-level, thematic and decentralized evaluations conducted from 2020 to 2021. The results of this review will serve as input into the HLE.

## PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CLIENTS OF THE EVALUATION

### Purpose of the evaluation

The high level evaluation on ILOs response to COVID-19 comes at a time when many of the member States are starting to come out of the waves of lockdowns and looking at what the response will be in the medium to long term. The evaluation aims to provide the ILOs constituent and the Office with:

- ▶ Accountability to its constituents on the ILOs response and how it supports the ILO Centenary Declaration, the SDGs and ILO's strategies, policies and results framework
- ▶ Real time lessons on how the ILO has adapted and strengthened its response to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work and how it is laying the groundwork for recovery and building back better<sup>315</sup>
- ▶ Analysis of key lessons from the COVID-19 responses and to document various good practices to bolster the evidence base for future programming and evaluations
- ▶ Formative aspect to provide the ILO with recommendations on how to support member States in providing a fully inclusive and sustainable recovery from the crisis and building back better.

### Scope

The present evaluation will cover all ILOs programme activities and actions between March 2020 to 2022. The evaluation will cover both headquarters and the work carried out in the regions and at country level. The HLE will look into the dimension of programme and policy action at global, regional and national levels. The evaluation will look at the institutional operational dimension of the Office's response to the pandemic in so far as it pertains to the delivery of its mandate and implementation of its strategies, programmes, activities and actions.

An overview of the main dimensions that will be included in the HLE is presented below, with a ToC and corresponding evaluation framework prepared as the basis for addressing this:

Evaluative dimension	Sub-area of analysis (as per EVAL's protocol)	
The ILOs programme and policy action at national, regional and global levels (including implementation management as EVAL framework under institutional readiness)	▶ Design for measuring Impact of ILOs response for the pillars below	All Dimensions
	▶ Outcomes of ILOs response for the pillars below	All Dimensions
	▶ Dimension A: Inclusive Economic Growth and Employment	Dimension A
	▶ Dimension B Protection of all workers	Dimension B
	▶ Dimension C: Universal social protection	Dimension C
	▶ Dimension D: social dialogue	Dimension D
Institutional readiness and capacity to deliver timely support in a responsive manner	▶ Focus of HLE: Response adaptability and timeliness	
	<b>Other sub-areas as they affect above:</b>	
	▶ Strategic planning and monitoring	
	▶ Consultation with constituents and continuous engagement	
	▶ Interdepartmental coordinated response approach	
	▶ Implementation management (Adaptive management)	
	▶ Strategic use of knowledge and partnerships for promoting decent work	
	▶ Visibility and communication	
	▶ Resources	

<sup>315</sup> Where possible the evaluation may look at the impact of ILOs work but it may be too early to be able to validate the impact of ILO work in the current evaluation and thus the focus is more on whether the ILO has put in place the measures that will allow achieve and measure impact further down the line.

The suggested scope of the HLE would entail an analysis of ILO's results framework and programme set-up. This will cover Policy Outcomes (POs); Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), global products, programmes and projects that contribute to the ILO's response to COVID-19 in terms of their strategic fit (relevance and coherence), effectiveness, efficiency, results, sustainability and potential impact. An analysis of resource portfolio (Development cooperation and other funding modalities) would be an integral part of the scope.

Efforts made to promote the normative framework in responding to COVID should be covered and emerging lessons in this regard should be documented. At the same time, the evaluation should include in its spectrum the ILO contribution to the UN global response to COVID and the SDG dimension. ILO's role in inter-agency networks/other relevant global networks and partnerships at national, regional and global levels should be assessed.

The evaluation scope will be further defined following the pre-scoping phase that has already begun, further desk review and portfolio analysis and consultation with key stakeholders. The scope, in the course of evaluation, can also evolve to include any other particular area of ILO contribution that might be critical to highlight in the wake of future directions.

## Clients

The main client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee of senior management overseeing follow-up to evaluations and the departments, regional and country offices involved in responding to COVID-19. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers. The evaluation report, together with the Office's response to its findings and recommendations, will be discussed in the GB session of October-November 2022 with a follow-up plan prepared by the Office and monitored during implementation.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions are structured around the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The questions will seek to address priority issues and concerns for the national constituents and other stakeholders. When designing the questions, the evaluation team will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Further evaluation questions will be proposed and refined by the evaluation team during the inception report phase.

The overarching evaluation questions with regard to the strategy, its implementation and outcomes are as below:

	Policy and programme action at national, regional & global levels	Institutional readiness & capacity
RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How has the pandemic <b>changed ILO priorities</b> for action and delivery approach in the short and medium terms?"</li> <li>▶ <b>How were responses to these changes developed</b> (including role of social dialogue and tripartism; changes in response to analysis/ data on new circumstances; support for national, regional, global/UN COVID-19 plans/strategies)?</li> <li>▶ What <b>actions</b> did the ILO take to address decent work deficits caused or worsened by the pandemic? How were <b>existing programmes</b> adapted? What new <b>interventions</b> were established? What was the focus of these actions (i.e. crisis response, preparing for recovery)?</li> <li>▶ Were actions underpinned by a sound <b>program logic and theory of change that reflected the new</b> circumstances?</li> <li>▶ <b>Moving forward</b>, what policy and programme actions will the ILO need to prioritise to maximise relevance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Did the ILO have any <b>policies, procedures and contingency plans</b> in place prior to the onset of the pandemic that helped prepare it for the crisis?</li> <li>▶ Did <b>experience with previous</b> global, regional or national crises inform the ILO's response approach?</li> <li>▶ To what extent did ILO's <b>programme and policy frameworks</b> (P&amp;B and DWCPs) remain relevant to the new circumstances?</li> <li>▶ How did the ILO <b>adapt its management approach</b> (in HQ and in the field) in response to uncertainty and unpredictable change in the early stages of the pandemic? Were these adaptations relevant, effective and timely?</li> <li>▶ How well has the ILO <b>engaged with constituents</b> and responded to their needs in framing the organisation's response to the pandemic?</li> </ul>
COHERENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How well have the ILO's actions in response to the pandemic cohered/created <b>synergies across the different outcome areas</b>?</li> <li>▶ How well does the ILO's response to COVID-19 fit the needs and concerns of ILO constituents and the national, regional and international development frameworks (United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, SDGs and national development strategies)?"</li> <li>▶ What are the <b>positive synergies</b> between ILO interventions and between the ILO and other partners (constituents, national institutions, international financial institutions and UN development agencies)? Is there evidence of <b>obstacles and challenges</b> in relation to synergies?</li> <li>▶ How well have the ILO's actions integrated its <b>normative and social dialogue mandate</b> and reflected its commitment to <b>gender</b> equality, supporting <b>vulnerable groups</b>, and <b>making a just transition</b> towards environmental sustainability?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To what extent is the ILO's <b>response to COVID-19 aligned</b> to the principles enshrined in the ILO Global call to action, the <b>Centenary Declaration</b>, and <b>emerging concerns</b> as expressed in GB/ILC discussions? How well does the ILO's strategy to respond to COVID-19, that cuts across different P&amp;B outcomes, aligned with the <b>key ILO conventions</b>?</li> <li>▶ How well does the ILO's response to COVID-19 deal with/complements other relevant national institutions and international agencies working on responding to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19?</li> <li>▶ How well has the ILO <b>coordinated its response</b> across HQ departments and between HQ and the field to ensure an adaptable and timely response?</li> <li>▶ To what extent do partners and stakeholders (internal and external) <b>understand and execute</b> their role in delivering ILOs actions in response to the COVID-19 effects in the world of work?</li> <li>▶ Is the <b>organizational/management structure</b> for delivering COVID-19 response actions on the ground compatible with the overarching strategy?</li> </ul>

	Policy and programme action at national, regional & global levels	Institutional readiness & capacity
EFFECTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Were actions (including at global, regional and national levels) effective in addressing the <b>decent work deficits caused or worsened</b> by the pandemic?</li> <li>▶ Has the ILO been able to apply <b>innovative approaches</b> for an effective and timely action to mitigate the immediate effects of the pandemic?</li> <li>▶ <b>Did certain groups benefit</b> from ILO response interventions <b>more than others</b>?</li> <li>▶ Which key <b>success factors, mechanisms and circumstances</b> can be identified? Which key <b>inhibiting factors</b> can be identified?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does the <b>current monitoring and reporting</b> (Outcome and indicators) allow for tracking the progress and informing the ILOs strategy to respond to the effects of COVID-19 in the world of work?</li> </ul>
EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How well were <b>existing resources</b> (including development cooperation project funds) adjusted to address the circumstances brought about by the pandemic?</li> <li>▶ Were financial and human resources <b>adequate</b> for the response and were they <b>used efficiently</b>?</li> <li>▶ <b>How timely</b> was the ILO's response in adapting existing actions and developing and implementing new actions?</li> <li>▶ Were actions cost effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How well have the ILO's <b>resource mobilization</b> efforts supported its capacity to deliver an adaptable and timely response?</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABILITY & IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What are the different <b>effects</b> that actions have had / are likely to have in <b>addressing the decent work deficits</b> caused/worsened by the pandemic, and what actions are necessary to sustain them? To what extent is the strategy and action <b>benefiting the intended beneficiaries and national policies</b>?</li> <li>▶ To what extent has the ILO <b>strengthened capacities</b> of governments, workers and employers organizations' representatives so they can better serve the needs of their members and participate in social partnership for COVID-19 response and recovery?</li> <li>▶ To what extent have the projects made/are likely to make progress as part of the COVID-19 response of the ILO in advancing <b>cross-cutting issues</b> of standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender equality and non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability?</li> <li>▶ What are the <b>areas of success</b> for the ILO? Are there <b>lost opportunities</b>? What are the <b>emerging lessons and good practices</b> for the future specifically in the <b>post pandemic</b> context?</li> <li>▶ How can the reach and increase of scope of observed results and early impact be <b>expanded</b> through</li> <li>▶ up-scaling, adaptations or complementary interventions? Do the ILO interventions <b>include long-term strategies</b> to ensure up-scaling and sustainability of results for a human-centred future of work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To what extent has LO as an institution enhanced its ability to support further work on the response and recovery in support of constituents?</li> <li>▶ To what extent has ILO improved its ability to respond in programme and policy terms to future crisis?</li> <li>▶ Are the Covid19 and crisis response dimensions integrated in ILOs results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability of the response? Do ILO results frameworks integrate recovery response in a sustainable manner?</li> </ul>

## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### Evaluation Approach

The HLEs in ILO take a summative as well as formative approach. They provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (summative). They are also forward looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework (formative).

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with [EVAL Protocol No 1: Policy Outcomes and Institutional Evaluations \(High-level Evaluations\), Version 2, November 2019](#). Furthermore, the evaluation will be carried out in line with the evaluation framework established by the evaluation protocol for COVID-19 mentioned above in section 1. There are two main evaluative dimensions and subsequent sub-areas of analysis. The evaluation will draw from past work such as meta studies, synthesis reviews and project and programme evaluations notably DC and RBSA funded interventions aimed at responding to the effects of the pandemic on the world of work, including other HLES in the period. The institutional readiness and delivery capacity will be looked at through the lens of ILOs response adaptability and timeliness of ILOs response. The evaluation will be based on the four dimensions as outlined in the Global Call to Action as illustrated in Figure 1 above.

EVAL proposes an Theory of Change and results framework based outcome evaluation approach, which determines whether an initiative has achieved the intended outcome based on an relevant and coherent approach and using effective and efficient ways to achieve or contribute to changes that can be sustained. The theory of Change behind the ILO's COVID-19 responses (covering actions both in the crisis phase and recovery phase) will be (re)constructed at the inception phase based on existing Theory of Changes in ILO results framework and within policy areas and will serve as the analytical framework against which processes and results will be measured.

### Evaluation methodology

The methodology will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the [Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#) in April 2016.

The evaluation will be participatory. Consultations with member States, international and national representatives of trade union and employers' organizations, ILO staff at headquarters and in the field, United Nations partners, and other stakeholders will be done through interviews, meetings, focus groups, and electronic communication.

The evaluation should pay specific attention to respond to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality responsiveness and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The gender and inclusion dimension as well as environmental issues and social dialogue will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team as possible. Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender and disability inclusion related strategies and outcomes. Specific measures to reflect gender and inclusion concerns should be elaborated in the inception report, in line with the UN GEEW-SWAP guidance in this regard.

It is expected that the evaluation team will apply mixed methods, which draw on multiple lines of evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and apply multiple means of analysis. The overall methodological approach of the evaluation will include, among others, the following:

### Scoping phase

The team leader along with the team member on the dimension on institutional support will undertake a scoping phase which includes the findings of:

- ▶ Synthesis review
- ▶ Further analysis of institutional strategy and policy documentation,
- ▶ Financial analysis and analysis of information from the PARDEV, PROGRAM and Finance databases.
- ▶ A survey of a sample of all ILO staff will also be undertaken to gather views and suggestions on the key areas that HLE should focus on as well as possible case studies.

The findings of this scoping will feed into the Inception phase.

#### Desk review of relevant documentation, such as:

- ▶ Normative frameworks including relevant Governing Body and International Labour Conference discussions, relevant conventions, protocols and recommendations.
- ▶ Strategic Framework(s); and progress reports; and P&B strategies covering the period 2020-22;
- ▶ Development Cooperation (DC) portfolio and related reviews;
- ▶ Implementation planning, management and reporting related documents;
- ▶ Relevant global reports, evaluations and meta evaluations;
- ▶ Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP)10 and country programme reviews, as relevant.
- ▶ Review of Policy Outcome, CPOs and Global Products directly and indirectly linked to the ILOs response to COVID-19.
- ▶ Review of financial (all sources and all modalities) and human resource portfolio that could inform efficiency related analysis within the scope of the evaluation
- ▶ Review of alignment to UN response plans, and SDG targets and indicators
- ▶ Findings from the synthesis review on the ILO's COVID-19 response published in 2021.

**Structured and semi-structured interviews** (for the most part through virtual means) that reflects diversity and representation within the Office (relevant sector, technical unit, regions and country situations) as well as of the constituents and relevant partners and institutions.

**Field visits** if local health regulations will allow at the time (5-6 countries, covering regions with coverage of each region as appropriate) ;

**Case-studies on a thematic, geographical, institutional dimension or any other relevant typologies (see below);**

**Online surveys** to obtain feedback and/or information from a wider set of constituents and other key stakeholders such as multilateral partners.

**Participatory workshop** to discuss preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations prior to the finalization of the evaluation report.

The details of the methodology will be elaborated in the inception report by the team of evaluators on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and initial desk review and interactions. The inception report will include a detailed evaluation framework with the methodological approach identified.

## Country and thematic case studies

The evaluation will be undertaken with primary data collection by a group of evaluation experts through case studies and interviews with key information.

The purpose of case studies is to conduct in-depth analysis of the ILO's strategic and programmatic means of action aimed at responding to COVID-19. The case studies will seek to determine the result of ILO's interventions on ground, and determine if these interventions had any observable immediate impacts, and to the extent possible determine the links between the observed impacts and the ILO interventions. The case studies may also highlight any specific achievements, good practices or emerging lessons with reference to key intervention models being used. The case-studies might also focus on a cross cutting theme or specific dimension identified through the scoping phase and presented in the inception report.

The thematic and country case studies will be identified at inception phase based on the results from the in-depth desk review, preliminary survey with key stakeholders and interviews with the reference group (see below section for further details) and other relevant stakeholders.

Overall, the case studies will consist of a combination of interviews, field studies, focus group discussions, and desk reviews to synthesize and aggregate information such as technical studies, and DWCP reviews from the selected countries and projects/programmes. This will allow greater triangulation while minimizing cost and time being expended on new, possibly repetitive studies.

EVAL has begun work on a initial scoping phase with the identified team leader. The scoping phase attempts to identify the full universe of ILOs work/response on COVID-19. The scoping will construct a theory of change based on the existing ILO strategic and policy frameworks as well as the documents that have been identified above, it will also build upon the evaluation framework developed by EVAL based on the articulated goals and objectives from ILOs global and strategic plans and calls to action. The scoping further builds upon the synthesis review that was completed in 2021. The full results of the early scoping, usually undertaken in parallel to the inception phase, will provide the evaluation team with a better understanding of what ILO worked on during the initial response to the Covid-19 pandemic, how it is working to mitigate the impacts and support member States during the recovery phase. In an effort to have as comprehensive as possible picture of the scope of the evaluation, EVAL will undertake a scoping survey to be send to a sample of ILO staff for their inputs.

## Coordination with ongoing initiatives on COVID-19

The evaluation team will also avail itself of materials and data from other ongoing evaluation related initiatives in the regions. The regional initiatives on evaluating evidence from COVID-19 or other studies are below:

- ▶ Asia and the Pacific region: synthesis review planned
- ▶ Latin America and the Caribbean region: synthesis review planned
- ▶ Arab States region: synthesis review planned
- ▶ Africa region: Synthesis-review of studies on the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa ongoing
- ▶ Europe and Central Asia region: In the context of the DWCP in Europe in 2022, a select number of European countries would be covered

The evaluation could also explore information sharing with other UN initiatives on evaluating COVID-19 (WFP, UNESCO, system wide evaluation on UNDS response, UNEG synthesis review of UN system Covid19 response etc.) planned for 2022.



## Summary ratings

A summary rating shall be expressed by the independent evaluation team at the end of the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions outlined in the ToR and the ensuing inception report. The evaluation shall use a six point scale ranging from "highly satisfactory," "satisfactory," "somewhat satisfactory," "somewhat unsatisfactory," "unsatisfactory," and "highly unsatisfactory."

- ▶ Highly satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that ILO performance related to criterion has produced outcomes which go beyond expectation, expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, produced best practices;
- ▶ Satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself;
- ▶ Somewhat satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and there that expected level of performance could be for the most part considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself ;
- ▶ Somewhat unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance show minor shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
- ▶ Unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have not been attained and the level of performance show major shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries; and
- ▶ Highly unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings, and the resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently.

The ratings will be decided together with the external evaluators and EVAL based on inputs from the synthesis review, data collection phase, achievement of the P&B targets, and results of the surveys of constituents, ILO staff and other multilateral partners (if conducted).

## Evaluation implementation and management arrangements

### Timeframe of the evaluation and evaluation work plan

The timeframe of the high level evaluation is November 2021 to August 2022, with the presentation of the evaluation findings and recommendations to the Governing Body in November 2022. An overview of the schedule is provided below:

Tasks	Dates	Responsible
Evaluation team hired	Nov-21 / January 22	EVAL
Preliminary scoping by identified team leader	Dec. 21	Team leader in cooperation with EVAL
Scoping interviews and survey by the team and <b>inception report</b> drafted	End Feb 2022-early March	EVAL and Evaluation team with ILO staff involved in the evaluation
Evaluation mission and case studies conducted with case-study notes/reports prepared by team members as required	March-April-May 2022	Evaluation team to interview ILO and other partners
Draft GB summary	Early June 2022	Evaluation team leader with inputs from team

Tasks	Dates	Responsible
Draft of full report	End June 2022	Evaluation team leader with inputs from the team
Final GB summary incorporating suggestions	Early July 2022	ILO stakeholders to provide comments and EVAL, evaluation team
Final Report, addressing the feedback on draft. The final report should have the executive summary and required annexures).	Mid- August 2022	Evaluation

A detailed work plan including for the case-studies will be included in the inception report.

## Implementation arrangements

### Management of evaluation

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. The evaluation team will be composed of Senior Evaluation Officers who will work as a team member along with the external team composed of international consultants with expertise in evaluating ILO's work, and evaluation team members/national consultants to support the case studies. The director of EVAL will provide inputs and guidance throughout the evaluation process.

A Senior Evaluation Officer within EVAL appointed as the task manager of the evaluation will play a critical coordination role and will be responsible for the evaluation implementation and contribute to desk review and case studies. S/he will facilitate access to all information from ILO sources, as required by the evaluation team. The Senior Evaluation Officer will also provide supervision support and substantive inputs during the drafting and finalization of the report. Other members of EVAL will provide inputs and technical advise throughout the process.

### Reference Group and stakeholder consultation

As there is no clear cut department or entity to partner with EVAL on this evaluation, a reference group has been established comprised of senior level representatives from the three ILO DDG portfolios, who are familiar with the work carried out by the ILO in response to the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Reference Group contributes to the relevance, credibility and utility of the independent evaluation by acting as a consultative body for the evaluation team.

The members of the reference group will designate ILO officials to facilitate coordination with the department and field specialists and provide relevant documentation as requested by the team. They will be the key technical liaison to the evaluation team, assisting in the identification of key stakeholders at Headquarters and the field and identification of key resources/documents.

Efforts will be made to keep key stakeholders at HQ and regions informed about the major steps of the evaluation process. Key outputs will be circulated for comments. Stakeholders will be identified and involved in the process as required.

### Use of evaluation

The following products are expected to enhance the use of the evaluation findings and conclusions by developing different products for different audiences:

- ▶ GB executive summary document for the GB 2022 (Oct-Nov) discussion
- ▶ The full report available on the EVAL website
- ▶ Knowledge event in the ILO on the evaluation findings and recommendations
- ▶ Presentation to the UN/external audience on the evaluation

- ▶ A PowerPoint presentation or visual summary of the report will be prepared for EVAL's website and for presentations on the evaluation.
- ▶ A 2-page 'quickfacts' summarising the HLE findings will be prepared by EVAL.
- ▶ An article in the EVAL newsletter on the findings of the report and dissemination of the report through EVALs social media accounts on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
- ▶ Progress and results of the evaluation to be communicated via EVALs social media
- ▶ Other communication tools as identified

### Proposed evaluation team composition, profile, and related tasks

A team of 5 external evaluation experts will be engaged to conduct this HLE. EVAL will be responsible for overall coordination and be members of the evaluation team. This evaluation will be inclusive in nature and will seek to involve all key stakeholders. The evaluation team composition will take into account gender diversity. Each of the "dimension evaluators" will be supported by a team of national/regional/thematic consultants, as relevant, in the identified case study countries. A detailed work plan for the evaluation will identify the specific focus, level of effort and contribution from the team members.

Team leader	Dimension A	Dimension B	Dimension C	Dimension D	Institutional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main evaluator</li> <li>• Draft inception report</li> <li>• Draft report and main report based on inputs from other dimension leads</li> <li>• 75 days of efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for Economic Growth and Employment</li> <li>• Case studies (country/thematic) supported by national consultants</li> <li>• To be undertaken by team leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for Protection of All Workers (OSH)</li> <li>• Case studies (country/thematic) supported by national consultants</li> <li>• 50 days of effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for Universal Social Protection</li> <li>• Case studies (country/thematic) supported by national consultants</li> <li>• 50 days of effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for UN overall context, environmental and other cross-cutting issues such as Gender</li> <li>• Case studies (country/thematic) supported by national consultants</li> <li>• 50 days of effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for analysis of the institutional readiness (policy analysis, CPO, budget/financial analysis)</li> <li>• Coordination internal and external to ILO</li> <li>• 30 days of effort</li> </ul>

The required profile of the team is summarized below:

- ▶ Previous HLE or similar high level corporate strategic evaluation experience
- ▶ Proven knowledge/familiarity with world of work, ILO
- ▶ Strategic perspective – demonstrated formative experience
- ▶ UN context, SDG, familiarity with Covid19 response context and evaluation of this
- ▶ Some exposure to humanitarian response, crisis work, recovery
- ▶ Multi-level experience from policy, operational, institutional levels – global, regional, country level
- ▶ Synthesis review or similar experience
- ▶ Policy document review experience
- ▶ Team players in large team formed for the occasion
- ▶ Understanding of coordination, collaboration issues
- ▶ Experience from evaluation of institutional changes, structure, response – e.g. agility, adaptability,

- ▶ Gender, sustainability, environmental
- ▶ Thematic areas of
  - ▶ Economic growth, employment – enterprises
  - ▶ Protection of all worker – OSH, vulnerable groups
  - ▶ Universal social protection
  - ▶ Social dialogue - tripartite structure, international labour standard, capacity development

The evaluation team leader will provide technical leadership and be responsible for:

- ▶ Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and drafting and presenting a final report; including the evaluation framework and the evaluation work plan (including any templates and interview guides) with the role and contribution of team members
- ▶ Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team;
- ▶ Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
- ▶ Managing the evaluation team related to the evaluation process, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements; and
- ▶ Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.
- ▶ A presentation to ILO staff on the findings of the report once the report has been finalized

The team members will be responsible for:

- ▶ Providing feedback to the inception report, drafting inputs to the inception report,
- ▶ Data collection in their thematic areas of all of ILOs work (to be refined at the inception phase) as well as provide inputs of their thematic areas into the case studies of the other team members. Each member of the team will be responsible for a theme(s) and will undertake data collection on their areas including 3 case studies that are mainly focussed on their thematic areas informed by desk review, surveys and interviews. In addition, they would also be expected to include selected questions related to other areas of ILOs response to Covid-19 in their case studies. The specific work plan will be discussed with the team members at the inception phase.
- ▶ Include ILOs cross-cutting issues in their thematic case studies
- ▶ Provide sections for the draft report based on discussion and in accordance with a template agreed with the team leader
- ▶ Providing feedback and factual corrections to the final report.
- ▶ Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy within their responsible areas
- ▶ Participate in a presentation to the ILO staff on the findings of the report to ILO

**Below is a tentative table outlining team responsibilities and team interaction, this will be further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation.**

	Team leader: T. Powers	Team member: R. Bowen	Team member: P. Breard	Team member: D. Todd	Team member: A. Corradi	EVAL
<b>Scoping phase/ design of the evaluation</b>	Undertake scoping phase/ construct TOC and evaluation questions				Preparation of portfolio analysis for scoping/ inception phase	Launch of staff survey
<b>Inception phase</b>	Interviews with identified staff and desk review of evaluation workplan, templates and interview guides for the case studies, staff survey	Select interviews as identified and discussed with team leader and EVAL	Select interviews as identified and discussed with team leader and EVAL	Select interviews as identified and discussed with team leader and EVAL	Select interviews as identified and discussed with team leader and EVAL	Participate in inception interviews and liaise with Reference Group
<b>Data Collection Phase</b>	- Undertake 3 case studies with particular focus on the dimension Economic Growth and Employment and the other dimensions based on inputs from the team members on the other dimensions and prepare inputs based on standard template	- Responsibility for examining ILOs work on the protection for all workers and gender theme across the region and HQ. - Undertake 3 case studies with particular focus on the dimension protection of all workers (OSH) and the other dimensions based on inputs from the team members on the other dimensions and prepare inputs based on standard templates.	- Responsibility for examining ILOs work on the universal social protection theme across the region and HQ. + on knowledge management and the quality of ILO's KM during the pandemic. - Undertake 3 case studies with particular focus on the dimension Universal Social Protection and the other dimensions based on inputs from the team members on the other dimensions and prepare inputs based on standard templates	- Responsibility for examining ILOs work on the environmental sustainability theme and the overall UN context in which the ILO coordinated and worked with across the region and HQ. - Undertake 3 case studies with particular focus on the dimension environmental sustainability and UN context and the other dimensions based on inputs from the team members on the other dimensions and prepare inputs based on standard templates	Further institutional analysis as identified through the inception phase	Participate in some case studies as identified and contract with national/ regional evaluation consultants as required

	Team leader: T. Powers	Team member: R. Bowen	Team member: P. Breard	Team member: D. Todd	Team member: A. Corradi	EVAL
<b>Draft Report Preparation</b>	Responsible for the overall draft report	Prepare inputs based on template for draft report	Prepare inputs based on template for draft report	Prepare inputs based on template for draft report	Prepare inputs based on discussion with team and EVAL	Provide feedback to the draft report, circulate the report and consolidate comments
<b>Final report preparation</b>	Responsible for finalization of the GB summary and main report	Provide factual corrections and respond to stakeholder comments for GB summary and main report	Provide factual corrections and respond to stakeholder comments for GB summary and main report	Provide factual corrections and respond to stakeholder comments for GB summary and main report	Provide factual corrections and respond to stakeholder comments for GB summary and main report	
<b>Presentation of the final report</b>						Prepare concept and organize the event with participation of the team

### Selection of international evaluators

Given the nature of the evaluation and its scope, the team was selected directly by the ILO Evaluation Office based on a wide search within the international development evaluation field, using established criteria and profile used in similar high level evaluations in ILO. The team leader of this evaluation was selected by EVAL given the evaluator's past experience and knowledge of the ILO in recent years especially on the topics of employment, a key area of work for the ILO during this pandemic, and his involvement in the synthesis review of project evaluations dealing with covid 19. The direct selection of the team leader was also based on his past proven experience in successfully carrying out and completing high level evaluations at high quality.

Throughout EVAL allocated great importance to relevant technical skills including ability to deal with the complex and wide range of subject areas this evaluation will cover, knowledge of the ILO and its field structure and the specifics of the UN system and the ILO, which in itself limits the pool of possible candidates. Principles of best value to the ILO, with price and other factors considered was applied.

The international evaluator(s) will be required to ensure the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. It is expected that the report shall be written in an analytical and evidence-based manner such that all observations, conclusions, recommendations, etc., are supported by evidence and analysis. The ILO senior evaluation officer will provide overall quality assurance on all key outputs.

The ILO [Code of Conduct](#) for independent evaluators applies to all evaluation team members. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service to which all UN staff is bound. UN staff is also subject to any UNEG member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services. The selected team members shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct with their contract.

